SELF-RELIANCE, SOCIAL WELFARE, AND SACRED LANDSCAPES: MORMON AGRICULTURAL SPACES AND THEIR PARADOXICAL SENSE OF PLACE

by

Anthony Ross Garner

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Approved:

_____	_____
Joyce Kinkead, Ph.D. Major Professor	Lisa Gabbert, Ph.D. Committee Member
_____	_____
Jennifer Reeve, Ph.D. Committee Member	Mark R. McLellan, Ph.D. Vice President for Research and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

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ABSTRACT

Self-Reliance, Social Welfare, and Sacred Landscapes: Mormon Agricultural Spaces and Their Paradoxical Sense of Place

by

Anthony Ross Garner, Master of Arts

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Major Professor: Dr. Joyce Kinkead
Department: English

Fundamental to the American agrarian tradition is the belief in the land's ability to endow those who work the land with desirable social virtues—*independence* and *self-reliance* being the most important. Endorsed by some of America's most influential thinkers, *independence* and *self-reliance* permeate America's agricultural history and are embedded in its language and landscapes. To assess the impact of these agrarian virtues on American agricultural spaces, this thesis examines the history and modern practices of a subsidiary institution of American culture: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Through historical and ethnographic research of the Church's industrial welfare farms and family garden spaces, this thesis examines how the LDS Church has embraced *independence* and *self-reliance* as motivating ideals for its agricultural projects. This study demonstrates that while Mormonism has consistently emphasized principles of self-reliance in its religious teachings and agricultural endeavors, its independent tone is

complicated by religious ideals of social welfare. These somewhat paradoxical values are further complicated by adaptations the Church has undergone institutionally and culturally during an era of industrialization and urbanization. The combined effects of self-reliance, social welfare, and modernization have necessarily imbued Mormon agricultural landscapes with a paradoxical sense of place defined not only by explicit values of independence and selfless service, but by complex economic interdependencies, social isolations, and spiritual connections as well.

(239 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Self-Reliance, Social Welfare, and Sacred Landscapes: Mormon Agricultural Spaces and Their Paradoxical Sense of Place

Anthony Ross Garner

What is the sense of place of Mormon agricultural landscapes? That is to say, what makes an LDS Church-owned welfare farm or a Mormon family garden meaningful to those who interact with it? In formulating a partial answer to this question, this thesis demonstrates how religious ideals of self-reliance and social welfare explicitly define Mormon agricultural landscapes, providing a sacred sense of their purpose to those who work and benefit from them. However, these sacred landscapes are complicated by developments of industrial agricultural equipment, corporate institutions, and urban demographics, which tend to isolate people from each other and the land they live from while developing in them a false sense of independence and sustainability. The LDS Church and its membership have learned to mitigate these negative implications to a degree, though I suggest doctrinal reasons they could do better.

As case studies, this thesis examines the motives and methods of an industrially scaled Church welfare farm in Blue Creek, Utah and a Mormon family garden in Bluffdale, Utah. Contextualized within relevant American and Mormon history, I explore the paradoxical sense of place of Mormon agricultural landscapes where ideals of self-reliance and social welfare thrive and social isolation and emotional interconnection coexist, which makes room for principles of economic efficiency and environmental conservation to find a compromise.

To Mom and Dad

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Like adolescence, writing a master's thesis can be an exciting, awkward, and sometimes painful experience: exciting in its intellectual discoveries; awkward in its initial expressions of ideas; and painful in the recognition of that awkwardness. And just as a teenager needs a complex network of family, friends, neighbors, and teachers, to survive puberty, a scholar similarly benefits from an encouraging community while he or she discovers his or her niche in academia. For patiently coaching me through my somewhat clumsy intellectual years, I thank Dr. Joyce Kinkead who offered meaningful feedback on each draft, and whose farm literature course set the tone and direction of my thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. Lisa Gabbert for introducing me to place studies through her graduate seminar on folklore and the experience in ethnographic research that entailed. Dr. Jennifer Reeve's agricultural expertise was also invaluable to me as a humanities student, whose technical knowledge and extensive reading list informed my research.

Beyond my academic mentors are the employees of Blue Creek Utah Crops whose cooperation through interviews and site visits provided the bulk of my primary sources. Thanks to Cary Sanders, Rod Montierth, Craig Hawks, Greg Grant, Clint Grant, and Clair Zollinger for their time and thoughtful answers to my questions. Also, a special "thanks" goes to my parents, David and Christy Garner, and older siblings, Richie Garner and Makenna James. Their thoughts and memories on gardening in the Mormon tradition form the reminder of my primary sources and constitute many hours of fond nostalgia.

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Ross Garner

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INTRODUCTION

This is the cultural history of two Utah-based Mormon agricultural landscapes—the Blue Creek Utah Crops welfare farm and the Garner Family Garden. The farm at Blue Creek is one of many non-profit corporate farms owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Inspired by Christian sentiments of caring for the poor and the needy, welfare farms provide the bulk of the food for Church welfare and humanitarian programs. The Garner Family Garden, on the other hand, is a family affair. Inspired by the Church's counsel and cultural trends to be self-reliant, the Garners strive to supplement the food needs of their suburban household by growing as much food as they can on their own property. They eat and preserve a significant portion of each year's yields and distribute the excess to friends and family. As agricultural landscapes shaped by Mormon religious values, the family garden and industrial farm each have developed a unique sense of place defined by their religious values of self-reliance and social welfare.

However, the farm and garden's sense of place proves more complicated than simple definitions and manifestations of social welfare or self-reliance. The welfare farm, for example, is dedicated to providing for the poor and the needy, but the benefiting poor never interact with the farm or those who work on it. Instead, each actor in the social welfare exchange is isolated from the other through industrial corporate structures. Considering that Mormon Apostle Dale G. Renlund has taught that social welfare is most effectively done when the giver of the aid has a close connection to the receiver, as "the greater the distance between the giver and the receiver, the more the receiver develops a

sense of entitlement,"[1] one would anticipate seeing this principle applied more overtly on Church welfare farms. On the other hand, the family garden is founded on ideals of self-reliance, as Church leaders have counseled Mormon families "to grow as much food as [they] feasibly can on [their] own property."[2] However, as the majority of Church members have traded rural living for urban and suburban lifestyles, their practical ability to be self-reliant on what they grow on their own property is restricted and at best performs a supplemental role to their professional employment.

In these case studies, the industrial farm, social welfare looks more like social isolation and the self-reliant family garden reflects the realities of a dependent suburban household. These paradoxes manifest themselves in the landscapes in unique ways, but the ways Mormons mitigate these contradictions offer even more cultural insights to Mormonism and American agricultural traditions generally.

From Myth and Symbol to Cultural Landscapes: Literature Review

Given the place-based nature of this study of Mormon agrarianism in America, it is reasonable to group it with the work of early Americanists of the myth and symbol school of thought. Like Frederick Jackson Turner, Henry Nash Smith, and Leo Marx, I am interested in the relationship between American culture (though specifically Mormon culture) and the land. In 1893, Turner famously asserted "the courageous, creative American spirit" that defined the country was a direct product of the people's continual

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[1] Dale G. Renlund, "That I Might Draw All Men unto Me," *Ensign*, May 2016, 39, quoted in *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016): 23.

[2] Spencer W. Kimball, "Family Preparedness," *Ensign,* May 1976, 124, quoted in Allie Schulte, "Seeds of Self-Reliance," *Ensign,* March 2011: 60-65. http://media.ldscdn.org/pdf/magazines/ensign-march-2011/2011-03-18-seeds-of-self-reliance-eng.pdf

westward expansion into untamed territory.[3] This spirit, Turner argues, animated the American institutions of government as they were "compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people."[4] Henry Nash Smith built on Turner's frontier thesis, claiming "the forces which were to control the future [of America] did not originate in the picturesque Wild West beyond the agricultural frontier, but in the domesticated West that lay behind it."[5] Smith focused the symbolic genius of America in its "virgin land" where "communities devoted themselves not to marching onward but to cultivating the earth," transforming the wilderness "into a garden."[6] However, Leo Marx took Smith's idea one step further, insisting it was not just the pastoral ideal of humans in a bountiful garden-like continent that made America great, but human-kind's development and use of tools or machines in conjunction with their work in the garden that determined the character of a nation.[7] This mechanization necessitates industrialization, Marx argues, leading to the use of factory systems on farms as well as manufacturing.[8]

Of course, determining whether the wild frontier, the tamed garden, or the machine in the garden is the right symbol for explaining America's unique history is largely irrelevant. Unlike Turner, Smith, and Marx, I am not interested in analyzing the human-land relationship to determine America's exceptional or defining attribute, or

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[3] Fredrick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), v. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm.

[4] Ibid., 2.

[5] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. (American Studies Group at the University of Virginia, 1950), 123. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/home.htm

[6] Ibid.

[7] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 145.

[8] Ibid., 47.

Mormonism's for that matter. Post-colonial scholars have rightly questioned America's exceptionalism, if only to keep it humble and ethical in its foreign affairs.[9] Furthermore, the problems with thinking that the wilderness or the agrarian life has a monopoly on moral, just, and democratic people have long been disclosed by social scientists;[10] and yet, the power of the agrarian myth persists. I do not try to avoid sentiments of agrarianism as I find them in my work, but neither do I seek to prove or disprove the agrarian myth as some mainspring of human virtue. Rather, I am concerned with how such agrarian sentiments mix with other cultural factors of religion and economics in the United States to create a cultural landscape with a distinct sense of place.

Scholarship on Mormon agricultural landscapes and their sense of place is rather underdeveloped. However, Mormon agricultural history boasts a robust literature. Economic historian Leonard J. Arrington is perhaps the most prolific scholar on Mormon agricultural history, and his books *Great Basin Kingdom* and *Building the City of God* provide significant historical insight for this thesis. The first book reflects Arrington's training as an agricultural economist, focusing on the economic history of the LDS Church from its founding in 1830 in New York State, to its development in the Great Basin through the rest of the nineteenth century. As intoned by the title, *Great Basin Kingdom* demonstrates how the LDS Church centralized economic power in the Great Basin region unifying Mormons through a sense of religious cooperative ideology. *Building the City of God* incorporates more from religious studies, seeking to make sense of Mormon group economics based on LDS theology. Examining several case studies of

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[9] See Seymour M. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword,* (W.W. Norton, 1996).

[10] Daniel T. Lichter and David L. Brown, "Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries," *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, (2011): 567.

early Mormon communities throughout Utah, Arrington explores notions of communitarianism, consecration, stewardship, and millennialism within the larger ideals of American culture. Both of these works provide important historical context helping to shape modern Mormon agricultural landscapes' sense of place.

In addition to Arrington's work, Thomas G. Alexander, Donald Worster, and Donald H. Dyal have each made significant contributions to Mormon agricultural history which I draw from frequently.[11] But one potential problem with these scholars' work is that they tend to focus on macro-economic issues of Church agricultural operations without paying attention to the specific, micro-level examples and the culture fostered and expressed there.

Partially filling this gap in the scholarship is M. R. Rathjen's dissertation on the *Evolution and Development of the Mormon Welfare Farms*. Recognizing religion and religious rituals as performed at sacred sites as one of the most exhausted studies of anthropology and cultural geography, Rathjen seeks to study the cultural effects of religion in the less likely landscapes of agriculture. In his dissertation Rathjen, begins by establishing the origin and purpose of the LDS welfare program, which he extends to the general inventory of Church welfare farms.[12] While Rathjen assures his research provides sufficient "information…for accurate generalizations," he admits that "there is a minimum of specific information regarding the operation of any one, or collection of welfare farms" due to Church policies and the private interests of those who provided

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[11] See Thomas G. Alexander "Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment, 1847-1930. *Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1994): 340-364; Donald H. Dyal "Mormon Pursuit of the Agrarian Ideal." *Agricultural History* 63, no. 4 (1989): 19-35.

[12] M. R. Rathjen, "Evolution and Development of the Mormon Welfare Farms," (doctorate dissertation, University of Michigan, 1969), 4.

him his research materials.[13] Such restrictions, and Rathjen's limited physical interactions with the Church farms, make it difficult to provide insight into their sense of place.

Since Rathjen's analysis, however, Church policy has changed, becoming much more transparent. In 2012, Matthew Maughan interviewed four welfare farm managers in Utah and Idaho for a master's thesis on how welfare farms "establish an environment for the application of the agrarian theology that has existed within Mormonism since its beginnings, and acts as an ideal setting for the creation of spiritual communities."[14] Maughan's research provides significant insight into the way these farms are managed and the philanthropic sense of community that motivates them. However, Maughan's thesis and Rathjen's dissertation both omit site visits and analysis, thereby limiting their ability to identify an accurate sense of place.

Another limit to these and previously mentioned studies on Mormon agriculture is the emphasis on legally owned and formally operated lands of the Church, while the agricultural spaces of lay-members are overlooked. Folklorist Danielle Christensen is currently working on a book entitled *Gardening and/as Placemaking in Utah Communities*,[15] but besides this ethnographic study there is little exploration of unincorporated Mormon agricultural places. One of my purposes, therefore, is to contribute to this emerging study of Mormon gardens while building on the established strength of existing scholarship on Church welfare farms, thus providing new insights by

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[13] Ibid. 5.

[14] Matthew Maughan, "Finding Soul in the Soil: How Welfare Farms of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Create Spiritual Communities," (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2012): 2.

[15] Danielle Christensen, "Curriculum Vitae," accessed January 2, 2018 https://liberalarts.vt.edu/departments-and-schools/department-of-religion-and-culture/faculty/danille-christensen.html

performing a comparative analysis of the cultural motives and methods that shape each place.

Thesis Outline

In chapters I and II, I establish the theoretical and historical context for my work. In terms of major theories that bear on my work, I specifically address American agrarianism, Mormon theology, and cultural processes of place-making. I show how Mormonism adopts aspects of American agrarianism and animates the idea that farming develops a moral and democratic people in paradoxical ways. I also explore how a sense of place is generally developed and understood by a culture, and how Mormonism specifically influences its place-making processes. Chapter II specifically explores how Mormonism's paradoxical strain of American agrarianism has played out historically, by examining the rhetoric of Mormon leaders over the years and the agricultural prescriptions and prophesies they made.

As a case study of Mormon industrial welfare farming, chapter III examines the Blue Creek Utah Crops welfare farm. This chapter's analysis is based on site visits to the farm; interviews with the farm's manager, employees, and volunteers; and historical context of the farm and related institutions or communities that assist in the work. The driving question in this chapter is, "what is the modern Mormon industrial farm's sense of place?" That is to say, what makes the farm meaningful to the people who interact with it?

Chapter IV takes the Garner Family Garden as a case study of Mormon family gardens. Similar to the study of the Blue Creek welfare farm, this chapter's analysis is based on site visits to the family garden, interviews with Garner family members, and

historical context of the garden and local community. Central to this chapter are the questions: What is the modern Mormon garden's sense of place? Chapter V synthesizes the studies of Mormon agriculture landscapes in chapters III and IV, and considers the future of the Blue Creek welfare farm and Garner family garden.

From this synthesis, it becomes clear that the scriptural language invoked by Mormon leadership sets the official tone and purpose of Mormon farm and garden places. As explored in chapters I and II, the somewhat paradoxical two-fold purpose of Mormon agriculture is to simultaneously provide for the poor and promote self-reliance among its members. Experiential elements reflecting this paradoxical purpose are evident on both the welfare farm and family garden, and constitute the major similarities in each landscape's sense of place. But the Mormon farm and garden quickly move beyond the Church's explicit purposes of social welfare and self-reliance to become places more complex: the farm becoming a place of social isolation with real and imagined global connections; and the garden, formerly a symbol of self-reliance, becoming a place of dependence on urban economic networks and the land itself. This synthesis, therefore, depicts paradoxical landscapes that work towards seemingly contradictory ends, but which function in meaningful and effective ways.

Taken together, I hope these case studies of cultural landscapes will increase the scholarly understanding of Mormon culture and inform Mormon farmers and gardeners regarding their agricultural traditions. I also hope as a hobby gardener, aspiring farmer, and practicing Mormon, that my research and occasional cultural criticism will not be misconstrued as a negative evaluation, but as an honest and scholarly appraisal.

CHAPTER I

AMERICAN AGRARIANISM, MORMONISM, AND PLACE MAKING

> On one basic tenant, democratic agrarians…agree: The farmer's labor not only creates material wealth, but cultivates virtues necessary to the nation's welfare.
>
> Kimberly K. Smith[16]

> Sacred places and sacred rites are an attempt at confining nature within bounds, so that it can be addressed and appeased, with the end that its powers yield more benefit than harm....Nature appeased through prayers and rites gives us religion; nature controlled through the exercising of human physical power gives us geography.
>
> Yi-Fu Tuan[17]

The United States of America had not yet celebrated its fiftieth anniversary when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York. As an early American institution, the LDS Church adopted and embodied many cultural ideals typical of the era, one espoused value being that America was an exceptional nation whose genius lay in its rural, agricultural based citizenry. As the U.S. government and Mormon Church continued to develop as institutions, their political, religious, and cultural leaders continued to emphasize the importance of an agrarian base to their democratic and religious success. These ideas not only developed America's agrarian tradition and influenced Mormonism's unique version of it, but shaped the actual agricultural landscapes as well. This chapter explores the development of American Agrarianism, the way Mormonism's unique theology complements and complicates it, and how these ideals transfer to a landscape and define its sense of place.

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[16] Kimberly K. Smith, *Wendell Berry and the Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003): 20.

[17] Yi-Fu Tuan *Religion: From Place to Placelessness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2009), 5.

American Agrarianism and Independence

As early as 1782, the nobility of farming was established in America's literary canon by a French aristocrat turned agriculturalist, St. John de Crèvecœur, in his *Letters from an American Farmer.* Crèvecœur describes Americans as "a people of cultivators…animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself."[18] According to Crevecoeur, as American farmers convert the "rude soil…into a pleasant farm…in return it…establishe[s] all our rights, our rank, our freedom, our power as citizens, our importance as inhabitants of such a district."[19] Crèvecœur *Letters from an American Farmer* may have been one of the earliest formal treatises on American agrarianism, but rights to being the founding father of the tradition rightly belongs to Thomas Jefferson.

Like Crèvecœur, Jefferson believed there was something in the soil that made good citizens. In 1785, Jefferson published his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, wherein he famously asserted, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."[20] According to political historian, Kimberly Smith, among the virtues Jefferson believed an agricultural life instilled were "industry, frugality, humility…and a reliable interest in law, order, and individual rights."[21] But the one virtue Jefferson prized most was "independence—specifically, independence from the ties of patronage and the

[18] St. John de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer,* (London, 1782), quoted in Joyce Kinkead, Evelyn Funda, and Lynne S. McNeill, *Farm: A Multimodal Reader* Second Edition (Southlake: Fountainhead Press 2016), 56.

[19] Ibid., 53.

[20] Ibid., 59.

[21] Smith, Ibid., 21.

economic influence of employers."[22] Jefferson explained, "Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition."[23] Furthermore, Jefferson hoped that as long as America had sufficient land, its citizens would always be employed in its cultivation.[24]

Countering Jefferson's agrarian ideal, however, was looming industrialism. As Leo Marx points out in his book *The Machine in the Garden*, for Jefferson to expect America to remain perpetually agrarian in the wake of Europe's increased industrialization was misguided. Cities and manufacturing would play a role in America's future whether agriculturalists supported them or not, and furthermore, to wish for a purely agricultural society was not only an impossibility but historically non-existent as the human-land relationship has always been mediated by machines where farming exists.

Marx's interpretation of history is largely accurate, so as agrarianism began to play second-fiddle to American industrialism it adopted a more romantic Jeremiad tone. Former pastor turned philosopher and essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, championed agrarianism and its close cousin naturalism throughout the ninteenth century, looking to the land for spiritual redemption. "Poisoned by town life and town vices," Emerson recommended people return to the land and their "original calling" and farm, predicting it would cure them of their ills and vices.[25] Virtue necessarily would replace vice, and,

[22] Ibid.
[23] Kinkead, Ibid., 53.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 66.

similar to Jefferson, Emerson's favorite virtue was independence, or as he phrased it, "self-reliance."[26] In his famous essay of that same title, Emerson declared,

> Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion.[27]

Against these demeaning forces of a market economy, Emerson urged that "whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist," which, in a day of industrialism, meant being a farmer—as the "first farmer was the first man."[28] With such strong agrarian sentiments, Emerson and his friend Henry David Thoreau became bastions of deliberate living, suggesting such a life required independence from a preoccupied world and an intimate acquaintance with basic work like growing one's own food or building one's own shelter.[29]

Besides Jefferson, Emerson, and Thoreau, a host of politicians, poets, scholars, and farmers have influenced the agrarian tradition, contributing new ideas like governmental deregulation and environmentally sustainable practices to be more inclusive of political and social groups. But one basic tenant has remained the same: farming is good for the people because it empowers them to be independent of a wealth-based aristocracy and fluctuating market economies.[30]

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[26] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance." *Self-Reliance and Other Essays* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1993), 19.

[27] Ibid. 21.

[28] Kinkead, Ibid., 66.

[29] Ibid., 70.

[30] Smith, Ibid., 21.

Mormonism

From its inception, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has cultivated an appreciation for the agrarian tradition.[31] Given the historical context of American agrarianism in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Church presidents and apostles declared there to be "no labor on earth more essential to the well-being of a community or more honorable than the labor which is necessary to produce food from mother earth," and that "a strong rural membership brings safety to the Church not otherwise obtainable."[32] As agricultural historian Donald Dyal observed after reviewing Mormon sermons throughout the twentieth century, Mormon leaders fairly "cl[u]ng to the agrarian ideal,"[33] believing the agrarian life was the surest way to make their people "self-sustaining and…absolutely independent."[34] Based on these sentiments preached over pulpits, Mormon agrarianism might simply be labeled as an identical replica of American agrarianism. However, upon closer examination of Mormon doctrine it becomes clear that the Mormon definition of *self-reliance* is not as straightforward and individualistic as Jefferson's or Emerson's.

<u>The Second Great Commandment: Self-reliance Combined with Social Welfare</u>

Unlike secular definitions of *self-reliance,* which focus on developing the individual's genius to provide for herself, Mormonism's definition (and Christianity's in general) insists that a shared premise is that the individual will serve and bless others with her temporal security. According to the current Church Handbook for Mormon

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[31] Donald Dyal, "Mormon Pursuit of the Agrarian Ideal." *Agricultural History* 63, no. 4 (1989): 23.

[32] Ibid., 21, 25.

[33] Ibid., 25-26.

[34] Joseph F. Smith quoted in Dyal, Ibid., 21.

leaders, "Self reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family. As members become self-reliant, they are also better able to serve and care for others."[35] This somewhat paradoxical definition of *self-reliance,* that seeks to harness the incentive of selfish pursuit with selfless philanthropy, is embedded Christianity's second great commandment.

Jesus famously declared the greatest commandment besides loving God, is to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39, KJV). *Love thy neighbor as thyself*—this is Christianity's primary guiding principle in considering one's relationship to other people. Ironically, the premise of this selfless Christian love is an inherent selfishness, as one can only know how to love a neighbor by knowing how one loves oneself. In other words, given a person's natural desires for physical comforts like food, clothing, and shelter and emotional fulfilment found in companionship, creativity, and usefulness, one should strive to make these things available to others as well. "On these two commandments" Jesus declared," hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40), which is interpreted to mean all other commandments and prophetic pronouncements are merely tangential to loving God and loving one's neighbors as oneself.

Further complicating the Mormon definition of *self-reliance* is the doctrine of Theosis, or the perfectibility of men and women. Within the Mormon tradition, deification is a preached though not fully understood doctrine. According to Matthew Maughan, Joseph Smith explained "deification as a ladder where one begins at the bottom and ascends step by step until one reaches the top, long after mortal life has ended. The doctrine of independence acts as a subcategory, or perhaps a ladder rung, in

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[35] "Welfare Principles and Leadership," *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010) 6.1.1.

the process of deification,"[36] and the act of cultivating the earth and thereby self-reliance in oneself is an act of becoming like God. But one does not develop his or her own godliness for the sake of becoming perfect; instead, developing that divine independence is tied inseparably to the mandate to help and serve others.[37] This close pairing of personal improvement and responsibility with selfless love manifests itself throughout scripture. Though generally the injunction to serve others dominates the scriptural narrative, the principles of self-reliance are always close by. Recognizing that neither *self-reliance* nor *social welfare* are scriptural terms, what follows is a brief analysis of scriptural passages related to the principles of caring for the poor and fostering independence.

Old Testament

Throughout biblical history, the God of Israel always made practical provisions to care for the poor. In the first five books of Moses where the laws of Israel are set forth, "the poor" are mentioned twenty-one times, and each reference expounds on the generous attitude the people of Israel should have towards the poor among them. These admonitions include commanding language such as, "thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother," and "beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart…and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be a sin unto thee" (Deut. 15:7, 9).[38] Borrowing the "thou shalt" language from the Ten Commandments and categorically

[36] Maughan, Ibid., 6.

[37] See David. A Bednar, "The Character of Christ" Brigham Young University-Idaho Religion Symposium, 25 January, 2003.

[38] See Deut. 15:1-18 for additional context.

defining the internal justifications for ignoring the poor as a sin, the God of the Old Testament leaves little room for misinterpretation.

And so it is with the practical social welfare programs recommended in the books of Moses. The tribes of Israel were commanded, "when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger" (Lev. 23:22). These guidelines requiring grain farmers to leave portions of their crops to the poor were also applied to those with fruit vineyards (Lev. 19:10). God instructs, "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon usury" (Ex. 22:25), which is to say, don't charge interest of those you know to be poor who ask you for money.[39] By these methods, it was hoped that a relative equality would be established among the tribes of Israel, but God (apparently a realist) warned that "the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land" (Deut. 15:11).

This concern for the poor, however, does not exempt them from personal and religious responsibilities. In their poverty, they are still expected to do the gleaning of the fields for themselves, and in terms of religious rites, they are still asked to make an atonement offering at the tabernacle's altar and "shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord" (Ex. 30:15). This is true of other offerings including animal sacrifice, incense, and oil (Lev. 14:21). Furthermore, the author of Proverbs cautions Israel, "better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is

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[39] usury: "The fact or practice of lending money at interest." *Oxford English Dictionary* accessed April 18, 2018 http://www.oed.com/.

perverse in his lips, and is a fool," suggesting a poor person can maintain a sense of dignity by living honestly (Prov. 19:1,22).

New Testament

Jesus' personal ministry highlights the concern Christianity should have in caring for the poor and dignifying their condition, but it also suggests even the poor have something to give. When a widow offered up "two mites" to the temple's treasury, rather than preventing the widow's sacrifice and directing his disciples to fill her purse and pantry, Jesus praises her generosity declaring, "this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury" (Mark 12:42-43). Later that same week, when "a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious" anointed Jesus head while he ate, Judas chastised her for the waste of the ointment, which "might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor." But Jesus rebuked him in turn, explaining, "she hath wrought a good work on me…She hath done what she could" (Mark 14:3-8). "Doing what one can," in terms of serving and sacrificing for others, seems to be one of Jesus' primary rules, which he applied to all people—the rich and the poor.

The New Testament, however, offers an additional insight into the practical affairs of administering to the needs of the poor. After Jesus's death, an economic redistribution took place among those who believed in Jesus's resurrection. According to the author(s) of Acts, this system ensured that there were none "among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4: 34-35). This is portrayed as the

ideal and peak of Christian discipleship in the LDS tradition as they "were of one heart and one soul," having all things in common (Acts 4:32).[40] There is no scriptural evidence describing what this communalism looked like in terms of agricultural or economic self-sufficiency, but this concept of cooperative living would influence agricultural based LDS communities in the nineteenth century and will be considered in greater depth in chapter II.

These teachings from the Old and New Testament form the doctrinal foundations of all Christian-based philanthropy, but the LDS Church's extra-canonical books of scripture offer additional insight to the doctrinal and practical aspects of caring for the poor and oneself. [41]

The Book of Mormon

Similar in tone, organization, and content to The Bible, The Book of Mormon is a religious history of a group of Israelites that branched off from ancient Israel before the Babylonian captivity and settled in the Americas. It is comprised of a series of teachings, historical accounts, and prophetic pronouncements intended to instruct the people to live according to the God of Israel's commandments. Confirming the biblical teachings, The Book of Mormon instructs its readers to "impart of [their] substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath," but goes further than the Bible by including the

[40] See also D&C 38:27: "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine."

[41] The author recognizes that The Book of Mormon as well as The Doctrine and Covenants may not be considered "scriptural" in definition by some scholars. The author admits these are complex texts subject to debate regarding their origins, but for the purpose of understanding the motives of Mormons in their religious based agricultural pursuits, these books are given equal precedent to The Bible according to the Mormon reading. See the Introduction to The Book of Mormon and "The Articles of Faith" 1:8 in The Pearl of Great Price.

specific ways of "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26). Prophetic council in The Book of Mormon gets even more specific when believers are encouraged not even to wear "costly apparel" so as not to become prideful and think that their wealth makes them better than others (Alma 1:27, Mormon 8:37. The Book of Mormon). Though not particularly enlightening as to how such specific instruction affected their agricultural or economic practices, it reveals the overall spirit of humility and equality that is encouraged among believers.

The Book of Mormon's most conspicuous model of an agrarian ideal that highlights principles of social welfare and self-reliance is a prophet-king named Mosiah. After a peaceful transition of power from his father, King Mosiah commenced his rule over the believers by commanding them "that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people," helping to establish himself as the most loved and esteemed ruler in the civilization's history (Mosiah 6:7; 29:40. The Book of Mormon). While specific language describing his methods of agriculture is not given, this precedent of a prophet-king engaging in agriculture himself for the specific purpose of not being a burden to the people establishes the sense of self-sacrifice and personal responsibility that should doctrinally motivate modern Mormon agricultural acts.

The Doctrine and Covenants

The final and most detailed examples of social welfare and self-reliance from the LDS scriptural canon are in The Doctrine and Covenants. Written between 1823 and 1978 by Joseph Smith Jr. and his predecessors, The Doctrine and Covenants is a series of

blessings, rebukes, prayers, instructional epistles, doctrinal discourses, and theological treatises. Each of the 138 sections and several official declarations are referred to as "revelations" and are considered by Mormons to be modern scripture for timely issues.[42] And many of those timely issues were in direct reference to administering to the temporal needs of its members.

Organized on April 6, 1830, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in the wake of the second great awakening. Preaching a restored Christianity through angelic visitations with a new book of scripture (*The Book of Mormon*) as proof, Mormon prophet and first president of the LDS Church, Joseph Smith Jr., attracted many converts through aggressive missionary efforts.[43] By January 1831 the Church had already gained a critical mass sufficient to warrant organizing relief efforts for destitute members.[44] In February of 1831, Mormons believe God revealed to Smith how the relief effort was to be organized. A bishop and two counselors were to be "appointed and set apart" to whom the members of the Church were to give or consecrate their property "with a covenant and a deed" (D&C 42:30-24). The bishop and his counselors would then give back a "sufficient" portion of the property to the members according to their needs, and the surplus was to be retained by the bishop to "administer to the poor and the needy."[45] This revelation, referred to as the Law of Consecration, was formalized a year later into an institution called the United Firm and later the United Order. As Mormonism developed, these ideas of social welfare and self-reliance influenced how they built cities,

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[42] See introduction to The Doctrine and Covenants for a full explanation of its significance to the LDS Church.

[43] See D&C 20.

[44] See D&C 38:34-35.

[45] Ibid.

organized businesses, farmed and distributed crops—thereby shaping landscapes and defining specific places in very real ways.

Place Making

Considering the impact of Mormon religious values on physical landscapes, understanding of cultural theory on place making and cultural landscapes is central to this study. A cultural landscape is simply "a landscape modified by the effects of human activity, such as framing, building, etc. (as opposed to a natural landscape)."[46] Cultural landscapes are significant to the study of history and culture because they embody "the cultural or artistic features of a country, field of activity," and people—Amish towns and farm lands tell a great deal about their cultural values, as do the parks and buildings of Washington D.C. Place making is the process of creation of cultural landscapes.[47] According to cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, place making is characterized by "a center[ing] of meaning constructed by experience."[48] Building of Tuan's definition, E. V. Walter suggests a space must be "seen, heard, smelled, imagined, loved, hated, feared, revered, enjoyed, or avoided" before it qualifies as a place.[49] A sense of place (from an anthropological standpoint) presupposes human interaction with the landscape and usually develops as a subconscious meaning in the minds of the people in question. According to Kent C. Ryden, this sense of place "results gradually and

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[46] "Cultural Landscape," *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed April 7, 2018 http://www.oed.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/view/Entry/45742?redirectedFrom=cultural+landscapes#eid121222184

[47] Ibid.

[48] Yi-Fu Tuan quoted by Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 1993): 37.

[49] E. V. Walter, quoted in Kent C. Ryden Ibid.

unconsciously…over time" as people become "familiar with its physical properties, [and accrue] a history within its confines."[50]

To help trace and identify the subliminal meaning of a place, Tuan suggests three themes or approaches to understand them. First, one must establish the "biological facts."[51] What does the landscape look like, smell like, and feel like from the human perspective? How do people function in the space physically? And how are their actions projected onto the land? Second, one must be aware of the differences and "relations of space and place." Space, essentially, is a location without established human meaning, and is characterized by "openness, freedom, and…movement." Place, conversely, is a location of significance, meaning, and value to a person or people, and is characterized by degrees of "security and stability." Space becomes a place when people "pause in movement...to know it better and endow it with value;" and the terms require each other for definition. Third, one must assess "the range of experience or knowledge" held by the people who inhabit the place. Additionally, one must understand how they gained that knowledge, whether through "direct and intimate" experiences of trial and error, or "indirect and conceptual" experiences through study and research. These approaches to studying place help define what a specific landscape means to a specific people, and clarify what the place-making process looks like.

The concept of place as a process rather than a static state is critical in establishing an accurate meaning of a landscape. According to anthropologist Debra Lattanzi Shutika, the two common perspectives on place studies focus on either reconstructing the place's past or simply taking a snap-shot of its present state, which

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[50] Ryden, Ibid., 38.
[51] Ibid., 6.

both communicate a sense of place permanence.[52] But according to her research among Mexican migrant workers and their "multi-local" sense of belonging, place is anything but permanent, thus complicating Tuan's original definition of place as a stable landscape. Folklorist Lisa Gabbert comes to a similar conclusion in her study of community in a small Idaho town. Based on her ethnographic research of the McCall's Winter Carnival, "community [or the town's sense of place] is an abstraction that became real through the organization, production, and performance of Winter Carnival."[53] Recognizing the fluid, evolving nature of place, Gabbert's study prioritizes the performance of culture: that is, the organized and organic human acts that contribute to the ever changing sense of place.

This, however, is not to discredit the importance of a landscape's history in forming its current sense of place. As American geographer Peirce F. Lewis explains: "In trying to unravel the meaning of contemporary landscapes and what they have to 'say' about us as Americans, history matters."[54] A landscape without a history is no place at all, but an undefined space, making an understanding of its history a necessary step in determining its sense of place. However, in discovering and writing about a place's history does not paint a picture of what the place has always been, but simply how it has developed into what it is, and where that might lead as it continues to evolve.

Scholarship regarding religion's role in shaping places is well established. In his book *Religion: From Place to Placelessness,* Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that history and

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[52] Debra Lattanzi Shutika, *Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in the United States and Mexico,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011): 13.

[53] Lisa Gabbert, *Winter Carnival in a Western Town: Identity, Change, and the Good of the Community,* (Logan: Utah State University Press 2011): 226.

[54] Peirce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape," *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes,* D. W. Meining, ed. (Oxford University Press 1979).

geography "is the story of how humans have tried to make themselves comfortable on Earth," but "it is also the story of how, in that very effort, they have produced sacred places and given rise to beliefs and practices that go under the name of religion."[55] In the production of sacred places and development of religion, people seek to confine "nature within bounds, so that it can be addressed and appeased….Nature appeased through prayers gives us religion; nature controlled through the exercising of human physical power gives us geography."[56]

One example of this type of cultural history applied to a Mormon landscape is Jared Farmer's book *On Zion's Mount*—an environmental biography of Utah's iconic and most legendary peak, Mount Timpanogos. Following cultural theory, Farmer explored answers to the question, "What caused a mountainous *space* to become the mountain-place?" What he found was a surprising shift of cultural meaning from Utah Lake for the Ute people to Mount Timpanogos for the Mormon inhabitants that was driven by both religious and secular motives.[57] Through this case study, Farmer explores the multi-cultural influence of Ute, Mormon, and mainstream America on Western landscapes, contextualizing Mormon cultural place-making processes within national trends and offering environmental criticism to the process and current sense of place.

In tandem with Farmer—though with a creative writing twist—literary critic George Handley ignores Utah Valley's cultural obsession with the mountain in favor of exploring the population's connection to Utah Lake and its tributaries in his book *Home Waters: A Year of Recompense on the Provo River*. As a practicing Mormon, Handley

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[55] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Religion: From Place to Placelessness*, ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008): 3.

invokes scriptural imagery and doctrine along with historical and environmental claims, hoping to "tap the potential of Mormonism to inspire better stewardship in the interest of all communities in the West."[58] However, recognizing that "landscapes [and people] are never generic," Handley argues that "only a sense of place feelingly attuned to the particulars of home yet wisely aware of the global and cross-cultural is worthy of sustaining."[59]

In the following chapters, I proceed in the same spirit as Handley and Farmer. However, rather than apply place-making theory to natural landscapes like mountains and rivers, I examine Mormonism's agricultural landscapes of industrial farms and gardens, and consider how religion has shaped them and how religion might be shaped by them in return.

[58] George Handley. *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010): xiv.

[59] Ibid, xvi.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL WELFARE AND SELF-RELIANCE: EVOLVING IDEALS OF MORMON AGRARIANISM

> The time has come…that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for *the poor* of my people…That through my providence…the church may stand *independent* above all other creatures beneath the celestial world.[60]
>
> Doctrine & Covenants 78:3, 14

Before applying American agrarianism, Mormon theology, and place-making theory to modern Mormon agricultural landscapes, it is first necessary to establish some historical precedent of such places. Since its founding era, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been a conscientious organizer of place. From building temples to organizing city plats, the Church has influenced sacred and secular spaces with purposes as varied as personal salvation and logistical convenience. In terms of its agricultural landscapes specifically, the Church draws heavily from cultural traditions and religious teachings of social welfare and self-reliance, which it pursues and applies with equal zeal. Though caring for the poor and insisting people care for themselves seem somewhat contradictory positions, Mormonism embraces both teachings and embeds the paradox in its agricultural landscapes. While other scholars demonstrate how other secular and religious principles shape and influence these landscapes, this chapter suggests the principles of social welfare and self-reliance are the two major and express purposes of the LDS Church's agricultural places, making them significant to this study. [61]

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[60] My emphasis.

[61] See Donald H. Dyal, "Mormon Pursuit of the Agrarian Ideal," *Agricultural History* 63, no. 4 1989: 19-35; Donald H. Dyal "The Agrarian Values of Mormonism: A

I begin by analyzing Mormon leaderships' rhetoric and Church programs between 1830 and 1900. This text reveals how doctrines of Zionism and Jesus Christ's second coming inspired experiments on communal and cooperative living, defined by local social welfare efforts and group self-sufficiency. These communitarian ideals determined how cities were platted, irrigation systems were operated, and grains were harvested and stored through the nineteenth century, shaping landscapes in very real ways. However, internal disunity and secular pressures made the cooperative society untenable for the Mormons, who abandoned ambitious ideals of their United Orders by the turn of the century. I then evaluate Mormonism's rhetorical and organizational developments regarding social welfare and self-reliance from 1900 to the present. During this period, Mormon agriculture (along with the rest of the modern world) experienced significant changes in farming methods through mechanization. This mechanization necessarily restricted how many people could participate in agriculture and began centralizing the control in the Church's developing corporate structure. Eliminating labor needs and centralizing control changed how Mormon leaders talked about principles of social welfare and self-reliance, and ritualized or institutionalized the relationship between members, the poor, and the land. While principles of social welfare and self-reliance have remained constant influencing forces on Mormon agricultural landscapes, their meanings and application have changed from a communal connection to the poor and to the land, to a distant and corporatized relationship in the twenty-first century.

Touch of the Mountain Sod," Diss. Texas A&M University, 1980; and Thomas G. Alexander, "Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment, 1847-1930," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 1994: 340-364.

Cooperation in the Kingdom: 1830-1900

Zion and Christ's Second Coming

A major tenet of Mormonism is that Church members should actively prepare for Jesus Christ's second coming. One of the Church's articles of faith reads,

> We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory (Articles of Faith 1:10, *Pearl of Great Price*).

While these seem bold and prophetic beliefs to espouse, the early Church was equally bold in its programs that sought to make beliefs reality. From the first years of its founding, Church members were called on proselytizing missions to all parts of the world to affect the gathering of Israel.[62] In 1831, Joseph Smith received a revelation that the Church was to begin building the city Zion in Independence, Missouri as a gathering place for missionary converts.[63] But because one city could not contain all of the Church, Joseph's plat for Zion was to serve as a model for other Mormon based cities; the idea being, Mormons would proliferate through missionary work to fill the world, and return it to its paradisiacal or Edenic state by replicating Zion indefinitely.[64] As this cityscape incorporated agricultural spaces, it becomes pertinent to this study.

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[62] "History of Missionary Work in the Church," June 25, 2007. Accessed February 17, 2018. https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/history-of-missionary-work-in-the-church.

[63] See Doctrine & Covenants 57.

[64] Richard Bushman, *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press 2004): 179.

According to an original plat of the City of Zion in Independence, Missouri, the city was laid out on a grid system like other modern cities of its era (see Figure 1). Central to the plan were two city blocks ten acres each, which were to be devoted to

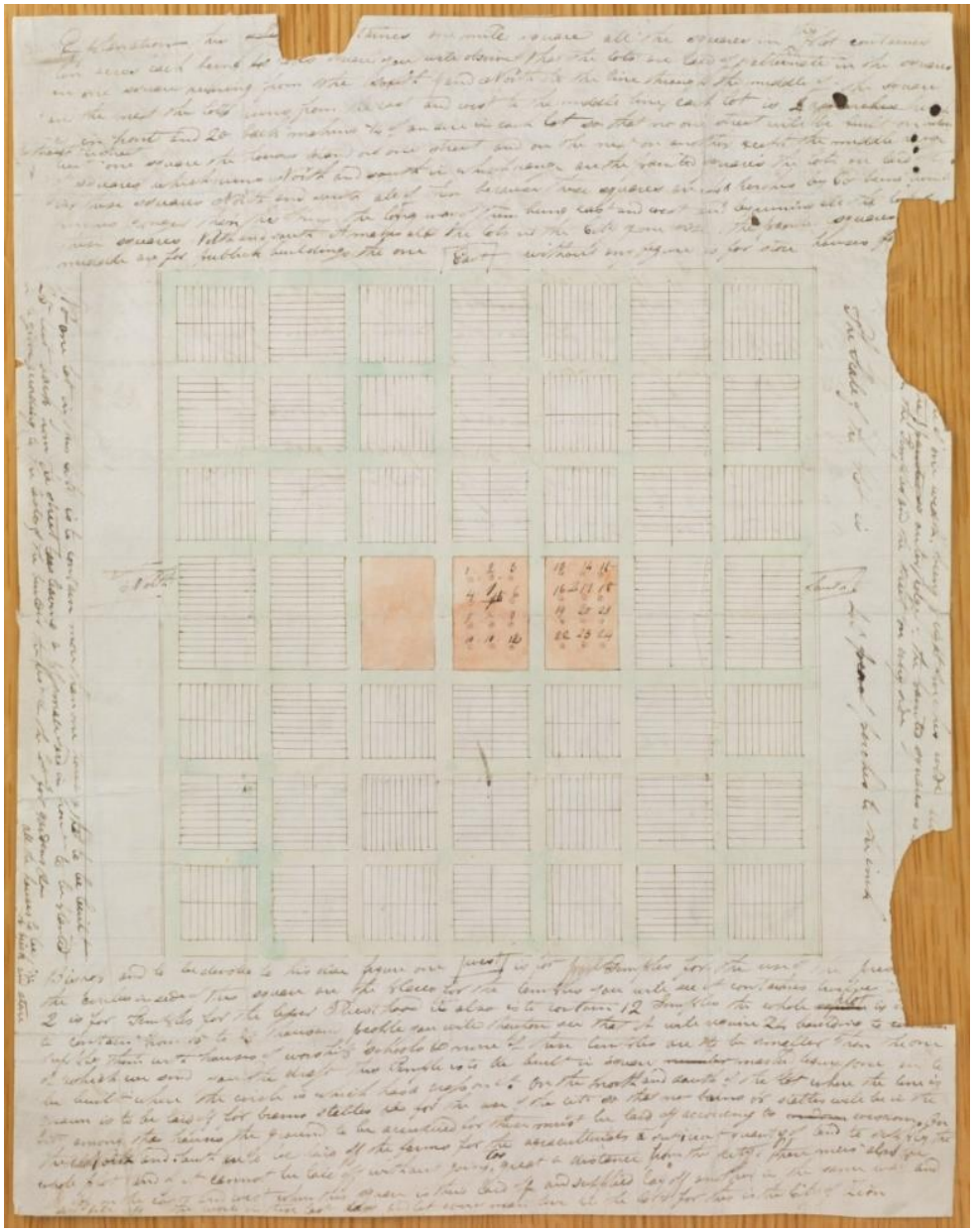

Figure 1 “Plat of the City of Zion, circa Early June-25 June 1833” (Courtesy *Joseph Smith Papers*).

temples—twelve on each block. Unlike modern Mormon temples, which are strictly devoted to religious worship, these "temples were to serve as schools and houses of worship" and other public administrative purposes.[65] Surrounding this central area, the remaining city blocks were to be subdivided into half acre domestic lots for people to build on and grow gardens and groves of trees as they saw fit.[66] While these garden spaces would constitute important agricultural places in supporting basic house needs, larger agricultural landscapes were placed outside of town. As cultural historian Richard Bushman observes, Joseph Smith "held the belief, rare for one who had grown up in villages, that everyone, including farmers, should live in a city…and go out each day to work."[67] This would be feasible because of the city's population cap at twenty thousand.[68] With the population grouped on half acre lots with semi-self-sufficient garden spaces, the fields, barns, and stables could be placed outside the city. Though the Mormons were forced out of Missouri before they could develop their City of Zion, the central planning of the city around religious and administrative places, surrounded by domestic space, and finally agricultural zones influenced all Mormon cities that followed.[69]

Within these religiously centered, agriculturally based cities, Mormons were to organize themselves socially according to the Law of Consecration in United Orders as revealed to Joseph Smith. As explained in the previous chapter, United Orders were

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[65] Ibid., 177.
[66] Ibid., 179.
[67] Ibid. 177-179
[68] Ibid.
[69] See Steve L. Olsen, *The Mormon Ideology of Place: Symbolism of the City of Zion, 1830-1846* (Provo: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies 2002).

religious organizations led by a Bishop and two counselors (referred to as a bishopric), who would accept consecrated land, goods, and money and justly redistribute it according to the peoples' needs, wants, and abilities. Originally there was one bishopric, but as Church membership grew, the organization to provide for the poor also developed, adding bishoprics over smaller populations with clerks, treasuries, and other legal provisions to negotiate the practical distribution of property. This was done according to a revelation given to Joseph Smith from God to establish "an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of my people," in order "that the church may stand independent" of the world's governments and economies (D&C 78:3). Once again, the Doctrine and Covenants demonstrates the pairing of social welfare and self-reliance as guiding principles. For with the command to give of ones surplus to the poor, God commands the poor with equal boldness, "Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer" (D&C 42:42).

However, this institution was more than a temporal necessity inspired by demands to care for the Church's poor and develop a self-reliant commonwealth—there was a spiritual side of it as well. Like the New Testament saints who united spiritually in the belief of Jesus' resurrection, and temporally through consecrated living, the Latter-day Saints felt a religious need to knit themselves together as one on an economic level to increase their spiritual unity. According to Leonard Arrington, Church leaders believed this consecrated life marked the apex of Christian discipleship and that a group that could maintain the degree of selflessness required to live in a cooperative economy would

perfect society and "lead men into the Millennium."[70] Other religious and secular societies before and after Mormonism's initial attempts have been inspired by similar millennial or utopian ideals, but the Mormon concept of a perfect society was based on the collective righteousness of the people and not the perfection of an institution.[71]

As in previous scriptural examples, these historical examples of social welfare and self-reliance are not always explicitly or exclusively linked to agricultural projects because Mormonism sought to organize a whole economy and not just its agricultural elements. But with the Church's exodus from the United States to what was then Mexico territory, these principles manifested themselves more overtly in agricultural spaces as the Mormons endeavored to build a self-sufficient kingdom in the Great Basin of North America.

Exodus and Resettlement

Forced from their settlements in Ohio, Missouri, and finally Illinois due to persecution over political and religious differences, the Church and its members trekked across the Great Plains of North America and settled in the unlikely arid mountain valleys of the Great Basin. But even in this geographically isolated region, the Church continued to face economic and political pressures from the United States government and economy that motivated Church leaders to develop a commonwealth that could function independently of the secular economy. Agriculture would necessarily form the basis of this self-sufficient commonwealth.[72]

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[70] Arrington, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976): 3.

[71] Ibid., 9.

[72] Leonard J. Arrington, *The Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 205.

The beginning years in the Great Basin, from 1847 to the late 1850s, were predictably marked by hardship. Economic historian Leonard Arrington described how the first year in the Salt Lake valley Church members suffered through semi-starvation circumstances—scavenging edible stems, roots, and animals as they could to stay alive.[73] The second year was characterized by economic regulation with a centralized system to control land distribution system, natural resource, public works, and a circulating medium of exchange, the main concern of the Church and purpose of these actions being to alleviate the "hunger and want" of the people.[74] An unexpected boon to the Mormons in these early years was the California Gold Rush of 1849, which provided a needed influx of trade as speculators passed through, but it also proved a bane to the Church as many members were tempted to leave their hardships in the desert in exchange for the potential ease on the coast. To those tempted by such ideas, Brigham Young declared,

> We have been kicked out of the frying-pan into the fire, out of the fire into the middle of the floor, and here we are and here we will stay. God…will temper the elements for the good of His Saints; He will rebuke the frost and the sterility of the soil, and the land shall become fruitful. Brethren, go to, now, plant out your fruit seeds…We have the finest climate, the best water, and the purest air that can be found on the earth; there is no healthier climate anywhere. As for gold and silver, and the rich minerals of the earth, there is no other country that equals this; but let them alone; let others seek them, and we will cultivate the soil…Then, brethren, plow your land and sow wheat, [and] plant your potatoes.[75]

The counsel to ignore the metal and mineral resources and focus on the agricultural and manufacturing elements of the economy became the official policy of the Church under Young's leadership. Young maintained that "every man should have his land measured off to him for city and farming purposes," for he did not "intend to have any trade or

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[73] Ibid., 49.
[74] Ibid., 57.
[75] Ibid., 61.

commerce with the gentile [non-Mormon] world."[76] Rather, Young envisioned his Great Basin kingdom rising "independent of the gentile nations" through its production of "every article of use, convenience, or necessity."[77]

Gentile Boycotts and Mormon Independence

Business was excellent for non-Mormon merchants at first. Young remembered joining a crowd of people at the store of Livingston and Kinkead where he "saw several brass kettles…full of gold pieces," which his people had exchanged for imported luxuries.[78] However, relying on imported goods did not qualify under Young's definition of a self-sufficient economy, so he instructed Church members to boycott mercantile stores, or at least only patronize shops that were owned by Church members so as not to give undue power or influence to the gentiles in their midst. This understandably made non-Mormon merchants resentful, eventually offering the Church their companies for a fair price if they were determined to run them out of town.[79]

In addition to discouraging the patronization of non-Mormon traders who brought goods from the east, the Church organized "an internal improvement program" which oversaw the development of agriculture by constructing irrigation canals.[80] Irrigation projects are perhaps Mormonism's longest standing influence on western agricultural landscapes, but the Church also organized agricultural fairs and invested capital in local

[76] Ibid., 47.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Arrington, *Building the Kingdom of God*, 80.
[79] Ibid., 86.
[80] Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 224.

cooperatives to produce and manufacture every commodity from cane sugar and molasses to cotton and silk.[81]

Brigham Young and other Church leaders preached the policy of economic self-sufficiency every chance they got. According to historian Leonard Arrington, during the 1860s

> Perhaps as much as half of the recorded sermons of general authorities was devoted to agricultural problems—the proper use of water, the management of crop and livestock enterprises, and combatting the visitations of grasshoppers, crickets, and Indians. Agricultural diversification and self-sufficiency were not only desirable *per se*, they argued, but were indispensable to economic growth generally.[82]

In each sermon on agriculture and economics, the emphasis was placed on group self-sufficiency rather than on the individual's independence, reflecting a vision of interdependent communities within the Great Basin rather than isolated homesteaders in the high desert. Church leaders did encourage individuals and families to be as independent in their home economies as they could, often citing their personal domestic situations as models for members and the Church organization to follow. But as the large polygamist families of Church leaders nearly constituted communities within themselves it should be recognized that this version of self-reliance was still group, rather than individually based.

The determination to be temporally self-sufficient combined with the need to settle new territory inspired the founding of new communities and agricultural methods. As Brigham Young called and sent out groups settle harsh desert areas, Church members were forced to farm or famish. According to John A. Widtsoe, agricultural scientist and former Mormon apostle, Utah Mormon communities are credited with developing the

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[81] Ibid., 227.
[82] Ibid., 223.

modern methods of dry-farming in 1855.[83] Though similar methods have been employed by ancient civilizations throughout the world, the Mormons forged the way for dry-farming in North America's high desert spaces, which is practiced to this day.[84]

Cooperative and Communal Attempts at Consecration

During Brigham Young's life-time, several attempts were made to implement the Law of Consecration. Through a series of cooperative endeavors[85] and actual communal attempts to establish self-reliant cities in United Orders,[86] Church leaders endeavored to inspire members to work towards the ideal of consecration Church-wide. But each attempt struggled to keep its true cooperative form and survive. Church leaders generally attributed United Order failures to the laziness and selfishness of the members, but Arrington observes how the general poverty of the early Church, its investment in non-liquid assets, persecution from non-Mormons, and legal barriers from state, territorial, and federal governments were equally problematic issues that contributed to Mormonism's failure to establish consecrated communal societies.[87] Whatever the case, as the Great Basin Kingdom developed through cooperative enterprises so did the secular pressure from the east to incorporate politically and economically, and after Brigham Young's death, Church leadership moved away from ideas of group self-sufficiency in

[83] John A. Widtsoe, *Dry-Farming: A System of Agriculture for Countries under a Low Rainfall,* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911), 354.

[84] A more detailed account of dry-farming will be given in Chapter II.

[85] Examples include Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) and the Brigham City Cooperative, which sought to provide an alternative to non-Mormon mercantile stores and manufacturing business.

[86] Examples of United Order experiments include Utah towns of Orderville, Kanab, St. George, and Richfield.

[87] Arrington, *Building the City of God,* Ibid., 38.

terms of establishing cooperative organizations and moved towards the privatization of industry.

Some Church leaders recognized the inevitability of this shift and resented it, but did not know what else could be done. Cooperatives like ZCMI were slowly bought up by just a handful of stock holders who then controlled its operation based on profit and interest rather than group welfare. And other cooperatives simply became so complex and involved in organizing every aspect of the economy that the leaders could not maintain it. Lorenzo Snow, who headed the Brigham City Cooperative, admitted in a letter to Brigham Young that "this amalgamation, absorption, monopolizing and gathering into one, and centralizing of all our industries…is a responsibility that I should never dared to have assumed. In fact I never anticipated such a result, though I felt it gradually approaching, but yet could not see how to escape and be justified."[88] But as the secularization of the Great Basin economy became sure, Lorenzo Snow's brother, Erastus, encouraged disillusioned Church members to "murmur as little as possible; and if we are not yet advanced enough to all eat at one table, all work in one company, at least feel that we all have one common interest and are children of one father; and let us each do what we can to save ourselves and each other."[89] If Church members could not rejoice in being one temporally, they could still be one spiritually and wait for a time when circumstances were more conducive to live Christianity's economic ideal.

Social Welfare and Self-reliance from 1900 to the Present

Utah was incorporated into the United State on January 4, 1896 and the first thirty years of statehood were both a blessing and a curse to the Church and the state's

[88] Ibid., 126.
[89] Ibid., 175.

economy. The Church ended the century with a debt of over 1.25 million dollars, which it struggled to pay off with just the tithing donations of its members. But with the privatization of industry, it could invest as a corporation in profit-producing endeavors by which it paid off its debts.[90] However, as a new and geographically isolated state in the national U.S. economy, Utah's economy struggled to compete profitably in the globalizing market. With the rest of the nation, Utah's economy experienced a boom during the First World War, but as one Utah historian put it, Utah "played the traditional role of an unskilled laborer—sought after during periods of high demand, but quickly dropped when demand slackens."[91] Where formerly most goods were produced and manufactured locally, after statehood there was very little local control over prices or the diversity of products, making Utah and the Church dependent on national and global economies.

The Relief Society's Grain Storage Program

In spite of Utah's growing dependence, a unique form of resistance to the global economy's power developed during this time of transition to statehood in the form of wheat storage and was led by the women of the Church. Originally, the men of the Church had been instructed in 1856 to "lay up stores of grain, against the time of need, for you will see the time when there will not be a kernel raised and when thousands and millions will come to this people for bread."[92] But as Mormon historian Jessie Embry observes, "the men of the Church usually did not follow this counsel and…sold their

[90] Ibid., 337.

[91] Dean May, "Introduction," in *A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah's Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression,* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press 1974), xvi.

[92] Heber C. Kimball quoted in Jessie L. Embry, "Relief Society Grain Storage Program 1876-1940," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974): 4.

grain to the stores, outside traders or anyone else who would give them a good price."[93] When confronted by Church leaders, the men passed the buck to their wives and daughters, explaining they only sold their wheat because their women wanted the money to buy luxuries.[94] Whether true or not, Church leaders chose to circumvent the problem by asking women to save the wheat their men seemed incapable of doing.[95]

The Relief Society grain storage program began in earnest in 1876 when Emmeline B. Wells, editor of the *Woman's Exponent* (the Relief Society's official periodical), published an article outlining the local wheat storage program.[96] Though the program struggled initially to glean and gather wheat, and had still greater issues storing the grain without it spoiling, Mormon women eventually established a working model that was replicated among most ward Relief Societies.

According to Embry, the original intent of storing wheat was to prepare the Church "for the destruction of the world."[97] The supposed date of the world's destruction through famine and war was 1890 or 1891 based on a somewhat ambiguous revelation of Joseph Smith's, wherein God told him, "if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man; therefore let this suffice, and trouble me no more on this matter" (D&C 130:14-15). Smith was 38 years old at the time, making 1890 and 1891 the time he would be 85, but Smith was martyred one year later after he received the revelation (D&C 135:1). However, the Church still kept this as a tentative return date of Christ and horded the grain just in case, refusing to even lend it to the poor

[93] Jessie L. Embry, "Relief Society Grain Storage Program 1876-1940," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974): 4.
[94] Ibid., 5.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 7.
[97] Ibid., 16.

or other social welfare causes. Once the millennial urgency wore off a little after the supposed date of Christ's coming came and went, the Relief Society loosened its grip on the grain and began to give it to Church members in need and ship it in bulk to relieve non-members affected by natural catastrophes like the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906.[98] The Relief Society's grain storage proved especially useful during the First World War when the U.S. experienced a severe grain shortage from shipping it to its allies in Europe. The federal government approached the Relief Society about selling the grain and the Relief Society turned the matter over to the male leadership of the Church.[99] The Church ultimately decided to provide the government with needed wheat supplies, but the exchange reorganized the wheat storage program, centralizing more of the power over the wheat under the Presiding Bishopric to the disappointment of the Relief Society.[100] Ultimately, the Relief Society's formal wheat storage program was discontinued in the early 1900s and the women's organization was asked to sell all of its remaining stored wheat and invest it in a trust through the Presiding Bishopric.[101]

The Church Welfare Program

By the 1930s, however, the Great Depression marked a return to the Church's grain storage program and a renewed emphasis was placed on the practical social welfare and self-reliance of the Church and its members. Burdened with the issue of unemployment like the rest of the nation, the Church was driven to invent ways to employ its restlessly idle membership. According to Glen L. Rudd's history of the Church's welfare system, welfare services started at the grass-roots level of the Church in

[98] Ibid., 22-23.
[99] Ibid., 45-46.
[100] Ibid., 49.
[101] Ibid., 60.

Salt Lake City's Pioneer Stake under the leadership of local leader Harold B. Lee.[102] This congregation's distribution of surplus goods from a central storehouse to the unemployed members who were willing to work odd jobs or help cultivate rented farm lots caught the eye of Church President Heber J. Grant. As the program matured and expanded its influence, the Church announced its "centrally directed welfare program called the Church Security Plan" in 1936 and asked Harold B. Lee to direct it base on a similar model to what he had done in the Pioneer Stake.[103] The Church Security Plan, later renamed the Church Welfare Plan, was based out of a central location called Welfare Square consisting of a grain storage silos and other processing and storage facilities housed on a city block in west Salt Lake City. The Relief Society contributed the money it had earned at interest through its wheat fund to the construction and supplying of this storehouse, though its organization and maintenance was undertaken by the Presiding Bishopric and new welfare program manager.

The stated objective of the Church welfare program was issued by President Heber J. Grant and his two councilors, J. Ruben Clark and David O. McKay, during the 1936 October general conference of the Church. The statement reads:

> Our primary purpose [is] to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle in the lives of our Church membership.[104]

This statement emphasizes the ideas of self-reliance over social welfare, highlighting perhaps the individualism ingrained in Mormon culture over the last several decades of

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[102] Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion: The Story of Church Welfare Since 1930*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995), 8.

[103] Ibid., 41.

[104] Ibid., 45.

incorporation into the U.S. economy. However, the sense of communal responsibility to the poor is still evident in the desire to "help the people to help themselves" by providing them work on Church farms, canneries, and other manufacturing facilities sponsored by the Church Welfare Program.[105]

Church Agriculture's Industrialization

While agriculture's mechanization had always been developing, it had largely remained scaled to family farms. However, in the wake of post-world-war industrial boom, agriculture experienced a major shift towards industrially scaled systems. Coincidentally, welcoming and even championing agriculture's industrialization in America was a prominent Mormon leader. Ezra Taft Benson, Mormon apostle and later president of the Church, served as Secretary of Agriculture under the Eisenhower administration for eight years. Like other Church leaders before him, Benson credited the "untrammeled initiative, enterprise, and freedom of [its] individual farmers" for the nation's unprecedented prosperity.[106] But Benson did not believe it was possible or even preferable for the majority of Americans—and Mormons for the matter—to remain farmers. In his book *Farmers at the Crossroads,* Benson argues that a necessary and natural consequence of agriculture's industrialization is the "net transfer of manpower from agriculture to other occupations."[107] Between 1940 and 1955, mechanization of farm labor was responsible for the mass migration of "some 8,300,000 persons" from

[105] Arrington, *Building the City of God,* Ibid., 344.

[106] Ezra Taft Benson, *Free to Farm* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1960), 4.

[107] Ezra Taft Benson, *Farmers at the Crossroads.* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1956), 16.

farms to cities.[108] In 1956, only ten percent of the U.S. population lived on farms and one farmer could feed more than three times as many people as a farmer fifty years before.[109] This demographic shift may have saddened former Church leaders, but Benson took it in stride and refused to see any negative consequences. "Never before have so few produced such abundance for so many," Benson exclaimed, shrugging off the 8.3 million displaced farmers as an "unavoidable adjustment" reflecting the "ever growing opportunities in American industry."[110]

In addition to agriculture's freedom from manual labor, another important effect of agriculture's industrial revolution Benson spotlights "has been to make acres of land, in and of themselves, a relatively less important factor of production."[111] Thanks to the application of technologies like fertilizers and pesticides "the same or greater output on less acreage" was made miraculously possible.[112] This representative rhetoric of the era reflects the decreased significance of human labor and land as central agricultural players in agricultural landscapes, and was partially justified on the grounds of self-reliance. Not surprisingly, Church welfare farms during this time expanded beyond their local community ownership and management to an industrial scale for the sake of efficiency, leading to their corporate management under the Presiding Bishopric with the farm's daily demands being managed by a payed farming professional with seasonal labor needs supplemented by local church groups. Chapter three delves deeper into this history, but in summary, the industrialization of Church welfare farms excluded many from

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[108] Ibid., 13.
[109] Ibid., 7.
[110] Ibid., 7,13.
[111] Ibid., 38.
[112] Ibid., 16.

participating in farming and isolates the remaining farmers from the people they work to support, as well as the land they farm.

Critiques and Counter-Movements to Industrial Agriculture

Understandably, some Americans saw Benson's policies as environmentally exploitive, relying upon technologies for fertility rather than the soil. Wendell Berry, one of Benson's more eloquent critics, called him on the environmental as well as human costs of applying economic principles and industrial systems to agriculture, explaining "the established agriculture has shifted its emphasis, and its interest, from quality to quantity, having failed to see that in the long run the two ideas are inseparable."[113] As a form of resistance to corporate agriculture, some Americans, including Berry, moved back to the land in the 60s and 70s with the intent to redeem the soil and themselves from an abusive economy.[114]

Curiously, while this national countercultural response characterized by hippies and communes was taking place, a parallel movement was occurring within the LDS Church. Though the Church had largely adopted mainstream agribusiness practices in managing its welfare farms, when counseling members, Church leaders preached a local agriculture similar to that of the countercultural hippies. Spencer W. Kimball, president of the Church during the 1970s, famously instructed Church members to "to grow all the food that you feasibly can on your own property,"[115] explaining how the temporal and spiritual benefits of having a garden should not be underestimated as a family participates

[113] Ibid., 7.

[114] Ryan H. Edington, "'Be Receptive to the Good Earth': Health, Nature, and Labor in Countercultural Back-to-the-Land Settlements, *Agricultural History* 82, no.3 (2008): 279.

[115] Kimball, "Why Call Me Lord, Lord, and Do Not the Things Which I Say?" *The Ensign*, May 1975.

in "the eternal law of the harvest" together.[116] By developing a home agricultural economy, Kimball believed "Latter-day Saint families [would] become self-reliant and independent" in a world of recessions, shortages, and pollution.

Social Welfare and Self-Reliance in an Urban-Corporate Economy

A problem with Kimball's vision of a self-reliant Church membership was that most Church members were no longer farmers who depended on their agriculture endeavors to support themselves, requiring the concept of self-reliance to necessarily shift to meet modern needs. As the Church grew exponentially with congregations all over the world in the twenty-first century, *self-reliance* evolved to mean keeping a year's supply of food on hand, getting out of debt, and saving money for a rainy day. Growing one's own food still had a place, but it was less emphasized. One article in the Church's monthly magazine *The Ensign,* entitled "Seeds of Self-Reliance," details the experiences of Church members from around the world who planted gardens. While some examples came from developed countries, the majority of the article was focused on the agricultural projects in third world countries or poor demographics like Bolivia, Cape Verde, and the Navajo and Hopi reservations, subconsciously signifying that earnest agricultural acts of self-reliance are a third world priority. The most recent update to the self-reliance initiative, as it appeared in *The Ensign* of October 2017, does not even mention agricultural pursuits, rather, it focuses on providing practical training to help Church members seek education, find better jobs, develop small businesses, or manage family

[116] Kimball, "Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *The Ensign,* November 1977.

finances.[117] In the twenty-first century, the rhetorical link between self-reliance's and agriculture within the Church is essentially broken in LDS culture.

In spite of this disconnect between agriculture and self-reliance on the individual level, the connection is alive and well on the corporate welfare level. Non-profit farms, orchards, ranches, and processing facilities continue to be a major function of the Church's welfare program, with major landholdings in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, U.K., and Brazil. Local members are frequently asked to fill seasonal labor needs on welfare farms, which according to Matthew Maughan "acts as a means of reconnection" to the land and each other resulting "in the creation of spiritual communities." But as technology continues to develop, it is likely that physical connection will be even more infrequent and disrupted.

To combat the impersonal nature of the corporate organization, the Church produces different media to show members how their service and donations help real people. Mormon apostle Henry B. Eyring recently counseled members to prayerfully consider how they can fulfill the commandment to care for the poor. He suggests that if members see a need beyond their control (like a natural disaster in some remote part of the world) they should prayerfully donate generously to the Church and imagine part of their contribution reaching those people who need it through the humanitarian efforts of the Church.[118] Though it would be impossible to track precisely what humanitarian aid the money funds as they are generally used locally before being pooled into a general fund, Eyring suggests the intent fulfills the law. Building on Eyring's comments, the

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[117] "Let us Be Self-reliant and Independent," *The Ensign*, October 2017, 42-49.

[118] Henry B. Eyring, "Is Not This the Fast I Have Chosen?" *The Ensign*, May 2015.

Young Women General President of the Church, Bonnie Oscarson, further advised members on how to close the gap between themselves and the poor and needy by serving in humble ways in the community; suggesting, that while it is good to want to help those struggling around the world, that desire should not eclipse the needs of people in their local communities.[119] Church leaders emphasize that the ability to help others is necessarily conditioned on each member's ability to provide for his or herself, making social welfare and self-reliance a matter of careful balancing between caring for oneself and others, and doing it in intimate ways that are not reported at the end of the year.[120]

Current Church policies, historical examples, and scriptural doctrines of Mormonism demonstrate how social welfare and self-reliance are foundational motives to its agricultural practices. And while these principles have remained constant over time, how they have been applied has changed. What began as a strong sense of group-care and self-sufficiency (as demonstrated by ancient Israel, New Testament Christians, and early Latter-day Saints), grew into an impersonal corporate structure that tends to distance the people from each other and the land. But there is hope that these gaps between people and places can be bridged through a place-based study of how social welfare and self-reliance play out in modern agricultural landscapes.

[119] Bonnie Oscarson, "The Needs Before Us" *The Ensign*, November 2017.
[120] Jeffery R. Holland, "Are We Not All Beggars?" *The Ensign*, November 2014.

CHAPTER III

ISOLATION AND INTERCONNECTION: CORPORATE PARADOX AT THE BLUE CREEK FARM

> But this amalgamation, absorption, monopolizing and gathering into one, and centralizing of all our industries…is a responsibility that I should never dared to have assumed. In fact I never anticipated such a result, though I felt it gradually approaching, but yet could not see how to escape and be justified. [121]
>
> Lorenzo Snow

Ninety-seven miles north of Salt Lake City, near the Utah-Idaho border, is the Blue Creek Utah Crops Welfare Farm owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see Figure 2 on following page). In terms of LDS agricultural places, this 10,000 acre wheat farm is the largest non-profit agricultural operation owned by the Church. The farm is managed by two full-time employees (Cary Sanders and Rod Montierth), with seasonal labor-needs supplemented by part-time employees (Greg Grant and his son Clint) and local Church members acting as volunteers.[122] As a welfare farm, the wheat produced at Blue Creek supports the Church's humanitarian projects, including disaster relief and social support programs throughout the world for Church members and non-members.

In 2014, The *Deseret News* (owned by the LDS Church) referred to the Blue Creek welfare farm as the "flagship" wheat farm of the Church and "its crown jewel" for reliably contributing "hard red winter wheat for the Church's global welfare program for

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[121] Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, *Building the City of God*, Ibid., 137.

[122] Cary Sanders, interview by Ross Garner, April 11, 2017, Appendix B, transcript.

more than a half century."[123] Though there are many other welfare farms owned by the Church that are equally worthy of study, this public appraisal of the Blue Creek farm makes it a particularly conspicuous cultural artifact to study. Also, given the scale of the farm and its influence on local and global communities, Blue Creek offers crucial insight to the sense of place on Mormon welfare farms.

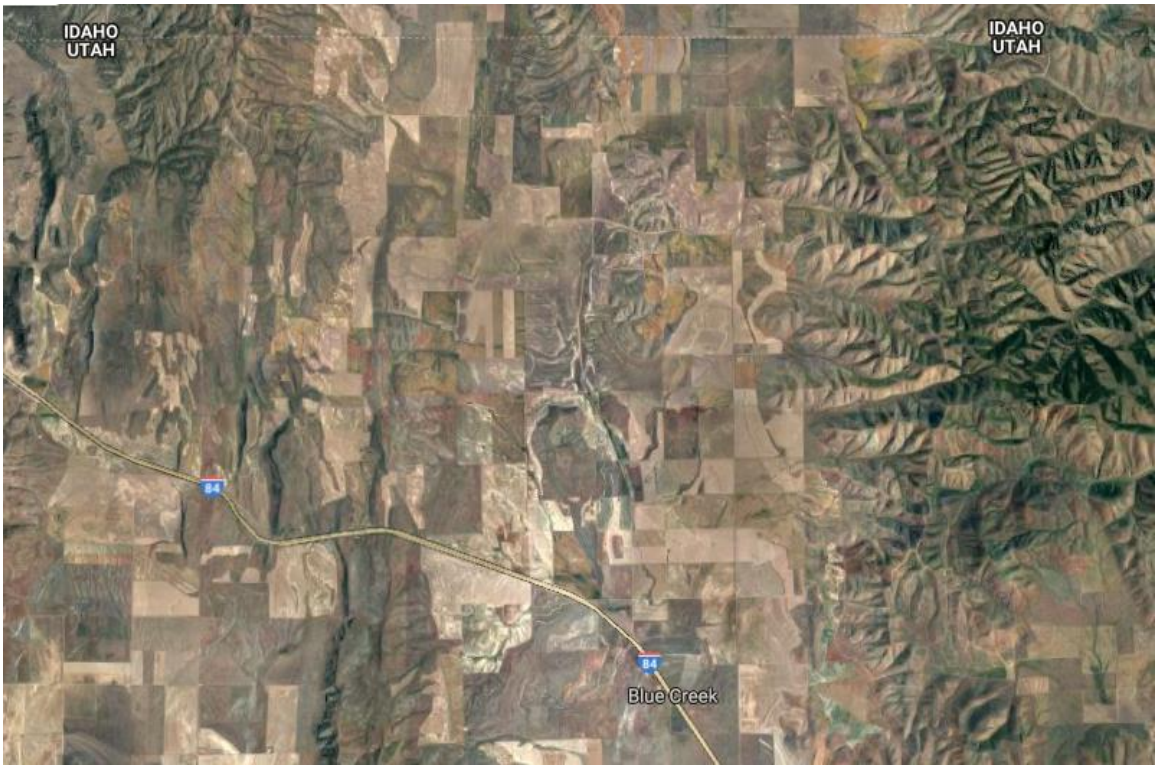

Figure 2 General Area of The Blue Creek Utah Crops Welfare Farm, April 2018 (Courtesy Google Maps)

In determining Blue Creek's significance as a cultural landscape, this chapter examines the farm's history and current modes of operation. I begin by reviewing the farm's history as a place defined by social welfare. Summarizing its growth from a

[123] Jason Swensen, "Church's Blue Creek Welfare Farm Helps Feed Thousands," *Deseret News*, 21 August 2014.

modest local affair, to the massive industrial project it is today, I explore how mechanized changes in farming methods, crop cycles, and equipment have shaped and defined the physical landscape. I then consider the lived experience of the farm—exploring how the farm's vastness, corporate management, and social welfare purpose affects the farm and its work. Finally, I explore the personal, communal, and global effects of the farm on the people who work there and those who benefit from its crops, demonstrating both the isolating nature of work on the farm along with its extensive humanitarian impact. Based on my analysis, this chapter shows how Blue Creek is a place of paradox, where social welfare is characterized by social isolation, but where spiritual connections are made between local and global communities through religiously motivated service.

Blue Creek's History of Social Welfare

Wheat Storage and the Church Welfare Program

Blue Creek's genesis as a religious agricultural landscape begins with the revitalization of the Relief Society's grain storage program and development of the Church's welfare plan. As historian Jessie Embry has established, the Church's history of storing wheat officially began in 1876 by the women's Relief Society.[124] Initially, the program's method for gathering wheat consisted of gleaning the grain from the private fields of Church members and through donations, but eventually, separate acreage was devoted to growing the non-commercial crop.[125] As the Church's welfare program developed during the 1930s, the Relief Society's grain storage program was consolidated

[124] Embry, Ibid., 7.
[125] Ibid., 9-11.

with the diversified crop production and food processing projects organized by the Church's welfare director and Presiding Bishopric.[126] With this consolidation came an expansion of wheat production and storage as the Church invested in more acreage and larger equipment. The Blue Creek farm was one of these developing investments.

During the developing stages of the Church welfare program, agricultural land investments were made on local levels by wards or stakes. W*ards* are "the smallest organizational unit" of the Church; *stakes* are larger regional organization comprised of several wards in the same geographical area.[127] Under the original welfare program, wards and stakes had complete responsibility over purchasing and managing of welfare farms, including labor needs and expenses. Each year, ward leaders were to estimate the welfare needs of their members for the year and their service capabilities; stake leaders gathered this information and submitted them to the general welfare committee in Salt Lake City. This committee consolidated all the welfare needs of the Church for the year, and with the help of the General Relief Society Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric, determined how much each stake was to contribute to the general welfare fund.

According to Glen Rudd, a participating stake leader in the welfare program and author of a history of the Church's welfare program, "the general committee usually did not tell a stake what its project should be. Rather, each year each region was given an assignment to produce a certain quantity of food, clothing, or other items of value during the following year for the storehouse of the Church."[128] In return, needy stake and ward members would have access to the resources they helped provide as well as those

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[126] Ibid., 2.
[127] Rathjen, Ibid., 33.
[128] Rudd, Ibid., 147.

produced by other stakes in the region. As a result, these assignments for the "annual production budget…were almost always enthusiastically received [and filled] because priesthood leaders felt strongly about the purposes of the welfare program."[129]

Blue Creek's Early History and Modern Development

In 1947, the recently called Stake President Robert J. Potter of the Bear River Stake, determined with ward leaders in Tremonton, Garland, and Fielding that their stake welfare project would be a wheat farm. Settling on 2232 acres owned by Wilks Nelson in an old railroad town called Blue Creek centered in the Pocatello Valley, the Bear River Stake purchased the established farm and began supplying the Church with hard red winter wheat. Initially referred to as "The Big Field"[130] (see Figure 3), this welfare project attracted the attention of general Church authorities, and apostles J. Reuben Clark, Harold B. Less, Henry D. Moyle, and Marion G. Romney accompanied Presiding Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin to visit the farm in the early 1950s.[131]

Figure 3 "Big Field" Welcome Sign to Blue Creek's Main Yard, 1980s (Courtesy of Clair Zollinger)

[129] Ibid., 148

[130] Clair Zollinger, interview by Ross Garner, October 11, 2017, Appendix B, transcript.

[131] Rudd, Ibid., 146.

The farm at Blue Creek remained its original size of 2232 acres for forty years, but began expanding in 1987 with the purchase of Knud Fridal adjacent acreage, doubling the farm in size (see Figure 4). Later that same year, E. A. Miller donated his adjoining 679 acres, bring the farm up to 5143 acres. Since this initial growth spurt in the 1980s, the welfare farm has steadily grown, with the Church buying adjacent properties as farmers retired and wanted to see their property taken care of. According to the current farm manager, Cary Sanders, as of 2017 the welfare farm is about 10,000 acres. However, based on the land records of Box Elder County and the farm's fluctuation through rented fields, 10,000 acres seems more like a nice round number to tell people and an approximation at best than an extensive and accurate inventory of this welfare farm's expansive land holdings.

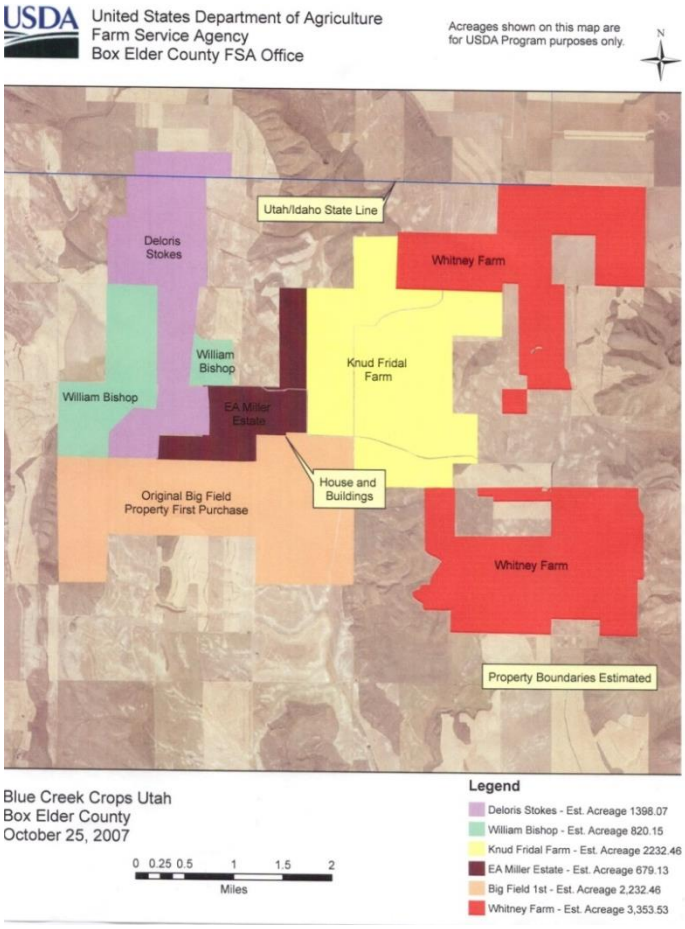

Figure 4 USDA Map of Blue Creek, October 2007 (Courtesy of Clair Zollinger).

With the farm's expansion, the stake organization could not keep up with the farm's management, so a full-time professional farm manager was hired directly by the Corporation of the Presiding Bishopric to

operate the farm. In the last 37 years, the Blue Creek farm has had two paid farm managers: Clair Zollinger (1981-2007), and Cary Sanders (2007-present). There was at least one other farm manager before Clair Zollinger, but his employment was likely a part-time position supplemented by the volunteer labor organized by the stake. Similar to its initial organization, full-time farm managers receive a production assignment each year from general leaders who also determine the crops they plant. Though Blue Creek has always grown wheat, it has also planted crops of safflower to act as weed control and be manufactured into cooking oil.

Farming Methods

Blue Creek is a dry-farm. Dry-farming is an agricultural method developed by and for places with twenty inches or less of rain-fall and no access to irrigation. As such, a dry-farm has to strike a balance with nature in order to produce a crop. Dry-farming limits the type of crops that can be grown (red winter wheat being one of them) and encourages the farmer to develop new methods to attract moisture. One such method is the practice of harvesting only the head of the wheat stalk where the kernels are housed, leaving as much of the wheat stem as possible.[132] This delicate process is made possible by a machine called a "header," which severs only the head of the wheat stalk. When more of the wheat stalk is left in the field, it provides greater surface area for dew, rain, and snows to collect on, thereby attracting and holding more water on the land. This process is also less taxing on the machinery, as the combine does not have to sift through so much straw and chaff to collect the wheat. After harvesting, areas are left fallow for a year to allow the soil's moisture content to build up and soil fertility to increase through

[132] Sanders, Ibid.

the straw's decomposition.[133] Leaving half of the farm fallow each year keeps the farm's natural fertility balanced, requiring fewer chemical fertilizers to produce the same result.

Working in tandem with the moisture-securing dry-farming method, Blue Creek also operates as a no-till farm.[134] Before no-till, the Church farm employed the traditional agricultural practices of plows and discs to manage weeds and prepare the soil for new crops. The problem with this method, however, is that it increases erosion, especially for farms with marginal lands like Blue Creek that is comprised some flat areas and steep hills. Erosion increases with tillage because it breaks up the old crop's root system and leaves the ground exposed, allowing it to wash away in a rain storm or winter snow melts. To prevent erosion, Blue Creek employed strip farming (see Figure 5), so the strips of vegetation running along slopes would catch the runoff, but this method was not a long term solution to keeping the soil in place. The no-till method aims to decrease soil erosion and restore soil health by practicing non-disruptive farming techniques by replacing the plow and harrow with a no-till drill that plants and fertilizes

Figure 5 View of Blue Creek's Strip Farming Method, 1980s (Courtesy Clair Zollinger).

[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

the seeds with minimal disturbance of the field's soil. With last year's chaff still covering and decomposing on surface, the no-till equipment makes a small grooved cut in the ground to plant the seed and fertilizer, which grows up through the chaff.[135] In addition to decreasing erosion, no-till also decreases the amount of fuel used, as the tractor only has to cover the field once to plant the seed, instead of the two or three times required by traditional methods in plowing, seeding, and harrowing the field. However, the tradeoff is the increased use of herbicide. Because plowing generally controlled intrusive weed populations, Blue Creeks resorts to a coat of 2 4-D herbicide over the fields to discourage the weeds during the fallow years.

Due to its somewhat new development and subsequent high overhead costs, no-till is not extensively practiced by other northern Utah farmers. As with any new method, many of the local farmers were skeptical when the Church switched to no-till and the expense of the equipment thoroughly discouraged them from investing.[136] The Church, on the other hand, with its corporate investments is not so easily discouraged by big investments because it can afford it and its extensive land holdings make such investments worth it in the long run. So the Church converted to the no-till method in 2007, which has proved viable for the Church and many local farms have since converted their operations to no-till as well.

Blue Creek and Welfare Square

According to Clair Zollinger, who was farm manager when the welfare farm converted to no-till, the motivating reasons behind each technological investment in the farm was to decrease long-term labor and production costs while maintaining soil

[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

fertility. But the underlying motive of the work and purpose of the "farm is to take care of the poor and the needy and the widow."[137] While no poor, needy, or widows ever visit the farm, farm employees and volunteers seek to connect themselves to the larger effects of their work by visiting Welfare Square—the Church's central processing and storing facility in Salt Lake City that provides tours of its extensive welfare and humanitarian operations. According to Craig Hawks, a local stake leader and frequent volunteer at the welfare farm, when you "go down to the Church's Welfare Square…you start seeing all the good they do, it makes you understand…the big picture of where it all goes."[138]

Intrigued by Hawks' experience, I took a similar tour of Welfare Square and was equally impressed by its large bakery, dairy processing plant, cannery, thrift store, Bishop Storehouse, and towering grain silos that filled two city blocks in west Salt Lake City. Outside the storehouse was a gathering of homeless people, perhaps just finishing a shift working at the Deseret Industries thrift store across the parking lot and ready to collect a week's worth of groceries. Though somewhat removed from the people it was supposed to help, I understood the social good the farm and Blue Creek accomplished by providing hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat each year to make the bread, cereal, and cooking flour that went into these peoples' grocery bags.

Experiencing Blue Creek and Its Sense of Isolation

Contacting the Farm: A Corporate Structure

My path to Blue Creek illustrates an important aspect of the farm's management and sense of place—that is, its corporate structure. Initially, I approached site-visit

[137] Zollinger, Ibid.
[138] Craig Hawk, interview by Ross Garner, 12 April 2017, Appendix B, transcript.

thinking the quickest way to contact the farm manager was through my academic or religious connections. I contacted professors and other employees associated with Utah State University's extension program assuming they would know the Blue Creek welfare farm's manager, but no one did. Disappointed in this first approach, I thought I would work through the Church's local ward (congregation) in Howell, Utah nearest the welfare farm. As a member of the Church, I was confident my knowledge of local meeting schedules and the general phone-tree-organization of wards would prove useful. But again I was thwarted—I could not get a response to my phone calls, emails, or social media messages.

Finally, I resorted to what I considered a last ditch attempt by calling the central welfare organization of the Church in Salt Lake City. Given the global and multifaceted nature of the Church's Welfare Department, I thought I would be passed around in the bureaucracy to service missionaries, secretaries, and lower staff members until I hung up in frustration. But to my surprise and relief, within three transfers, I was talking to the person over welfare farms in northern Utah. I explained my project to him, and he gave me the number for Cary Sanders, the farm manager at Blue Creek. After four weeks of dead ends, I finally contacted Blue Creek's manager through a four-minute bureaucratic phone-chain. Where I expected a local connection to the farm, I found none—or at least none open to me. I was isolated from the people I needed to contact who geographically and socially should have been very accessible (being only thirty miles from where I lived and members of the same religion). Instead, my path to the farm lay eighty miles south at the global organization's center; I had to go to the city before I could get to the farm.

Visiting the Farm: Vastness and Islands of Meaning

Once I contacted Sanders and got permission from his supervisor for my interview and visit to the farm, my trip followed closer to my expectations of a rural experience: Sanders gave me verbal directions to the farm (as GPS systems were unreliable in that region), and I was nearly late to the appointment because I got stuck behind two tractors going thirty miles per hour on a fifty miles per hour highway.

I made the forty-five minute drive on April 11, 2017, and my first look at the farm was from the highway where I could see five large storage bins, a double-bay shop, and some old equipment in the yard. As I pulled into the yard I passed a formal blue-vinyl sign with white lettering that faced the frontage road and away from the interstate, identifying the property as "Blue Creek Utah Crops" owned by "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Adjacent to the sign and similarly on display were two old, pieces of farm machinery: a horse-drawn thresher and a grain auger. However, this initial rustic display was dwarfed by the farm's modern functional equipment and structures. Dominating the yard were tractors, trucks, storage bins, and a machine shop. The storage bins were especially impressive.

Figure 6 New Blue Creek Sign and Yard, April 2017 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

Equipped with a semi-truck scale and loading dock, the

five storage bins were built in 2006 and can hold over 250,000 bushels of wheat. But the most overwhelming element of the farm was the sheer vastness of the land. In each direction, roads stretched off into the horizon with nothing but fallow fields and budding wheat crops. Beside the blue and white sign next to the old equipment at the front of the yard, there were no signs identifying fields, or even fences providing a more manageable idea of the place—just thousands and thousands of acres of open fields, which were sometimes interrupted by dirt roads.

According to place scholar, Yi-Fu Tuan, "there is a limit…to imagination's power" to turn a landscape into a place. "Confronted by mind-numbing immensity," Tuan explains, "not only will imagination fail to convert space into place, but the very idea of place—human in scale and dense with feeling—vanishes."[139] I experienced this vanishing of place upon visiting Blue Creek. Though it was my first visit and I had no experiences to attach to the landscape yet, the farm's expansive nature was overwhelming. Yet, the farm was not quite placeless, the cultural meaning was just concentrated in small areas scattered throughout the space. These islands of meaning were two work yards, the one previously described lying just off the freeway, and the main yard located at the center of the farm on the border of the original 2232 acre field. These yards housed the equipment and the employees when not in the fields, and where the people and equipment come to rest—a necessary component in place making. When people stop moving, they experience something other than moving, and thereby attach meaning to a place as a destination. The main yard is the place of the day-to-day work of the employees, and consists of a shop for tools, chemicals, seeds and other supplies; a

[139] Tuan, *Religion*, Ibid., 38.

large steel-domed barn to store the combine, sprayer, tractor, and a dump truck; and an old. Other farm implements like the wheat header, seed and fertilizer hopper, no-till compact drill, and smaller storage bins and augers were spread out over the rest of the yard.

For the farm employees, work revolves around equipment. If they are not operating the tractor, combine, or sprayer, they are performing maintenance work on them, or managing the resources like herbicide, fertilizer, grain, and fuel that the machines spray, plant, harvest, and burn. The machines fill the workspace created for them, demanding attention and awe with their potential power for work. The house on the property had a less commanding presence. Built in the 1980s, its purpose was to provide a comfortable and convenient place for the farm manager and employees to stay during busy times of the year, but Cary Sanders admits he has not and would not stay in it, saying he has left it to the rats.[140]

Figure 7 Cary Sanders, September 2017 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

People on the Farm: Employees and Volunteers

I met Sanders at the machine shop near the yard entrance. His tanned face seemed to spite the ball-cap he wore, and already showed days of fieldwork though it was early in the season (see Figure 7). We shook hands, jumped into his mud spattered Chevy pick-up

[140] Sanders, Ibid.

truck, and headed out to what he called the "main yard," located near the center of the farm.[141] Sanders is a life-long farmer, growing up on a family farm in Idaho and graduating from Utah State University with a degree in crop science and agronomy. Deciding he would not or could not go back to the family farm, Sanders has worked for Church welfare farms in some capacity since his graduation. Sanders lives in Brigham City, about a 45 minute commute from the farm, with his young family.

At the main yard, I met the other full time employee Rod Montierth, hunched over a welding project. Rod is the main equipment operator while Sanders is the planner and resource manager, though they both spend fairly equal time on the machines. On a subsequent visit, I met the part-time and seasonal employees, Greg Grant and his son Clint. The Grants used to own property of their own, or at least Greg's family did, but they were some of the farmers who sold their property to the Church and the seasonal work suited Greg and Clint's lifestyle. Greg specializes in grading equipment used on the farm to create berms or to smooth them out. Clint mainly works during harvest time when they needed drivers to haul loads of grain from the fields to the storage bins.

I only met one member of the volunteer labor force. Craig Hawk was the High Councilor in the Tremonton Stake assigned to assist with the welfare farm. He also served as mayor of the city Howell, the closest town to the Blue Creek farm. Hawk farmed a little on his property in Howell, but was a retired truck driver for ATK Thiokol, a rocket propulsion company in the south end of the Pocatello Valley. As farming became less profitable most farmers had to work for major regional industries like Thiokol to make ends meet. Hawk explained how it was his responsibility to get

[141] Ibid.

volunteers from the wards in the stake to help drive grain trucks during harvest time, clean out the storage bins in the spring, or remove rocks from the fields during the summer. Most of it is fairly low skill level work, except for driving the trucks, so most people can volunteer and find themselves useful on the farm. In 2016, Hawk said he logged about 1500 hours of volunteer labor in one harvest season. So, while volunteers are only needed two or three times a year, their contribution is significant and the farm would have substantially higher labor costs without them.

Farm Equipment: Isolating the Farmer from People and the Land

In considering the farm tools Blue Creek uses, the largest and most impressive piece of equipment was the signature green and yellow John Deer tractor. The tractor is a rural icon, and for good reason. It is the tool by which the majority of the actual farm work is done, and where the farmer spends a good deal of time. This particular tractor is the second largest model John Deere makes, and with the sixty foot spread of the attached compact drill, Sanders can plant four hundred acres of wheat in a day.[142] Sanders also utilizes the combine, sprayer, and semi-trucks on a regular basis in his work. About four months out of the year, Sanders is operating one of these pieces of equipment on a daily basis, and the rest of the year is spent maintaining these machines, managing wheat storage, and other aspects of the farm.[143]

The mechanical capacity of these machines is truly remarkable. Whether it is the GPS system that steers the tractor in a straight line, the header that cuts off just the kernels of the wheat, the combine that separates the chaff from the grain, or the sprayer with its one hundred foot spread, these modern farm tools are designed for efficiency.

[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

Given the precision of these machines, computer technology is a necessity. "It's just like new vehicles," Sanders explains, "it's all computerized…we don't do anything typically but grease them and check the oil"; and when they need maintenance, John Deere visits the farm to service them, because "typically, it's computer issues."[144] He then explained how some tractors are set up so that when something breaks down, the tractor itself sends a message to the local John Deere store and they are able to diagnose the problem from town and bring the needed parts on their first visit rather than driving out to assess what it needs. When I asked if he loved or hated having the maintenance of the machines being out of his hands, Sanders responded, "You just get used to it."

But this connection is not the only side effect of the farm's added technology. Typically, applying new technology to agriculture makes processes more efficient, enabling the farmer to do more with less. At the Blue Creek Farm, this trend has reached an incredible point where two men can operate 10,000 acres largely by themselves, when sixty years ago it took approximately eighty people to work the same amount of land.[145] So, with fewer bodies working the land, it necessarily implies greater geographical isolation for those who remain. 10,000 acres is approximately 10,000 football fields, which is equivalent to two-thirds the size of Manhattan. And if one considers the 1.6 million people living in Manhattan, with an average 106 people per acre, the sense of geographical and social isolation sinks in for Sanders and the other full-time employee left to farm 10,000 acres.

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Randy E. Ilg. "The Changing Face of Farm Employement." *Monthly Labor Review*, April (1995): 5.

However, isolation on the farm is hardly a new development. As Joyce Kinkead et. al demonstrate through a review of farm literature, troubles of isolation always plagued farmers in the American West—especially women.[146] To quote Annie Pike Greenwood in her book *We Sage Brush Folk*, "there is no escape for the wife and children…No European, nor any Eastern American farm, can compare in its state of isolation with those sagebrush farms of ours, green gems set in the midst of long stretches of desert land."[147] In many respects, isolation comes with the territory of farming, especially farming in the West. But this modern isolation is unique—being exaggerated in terms of people per acre, though it is tempered by modern conveniences of transportation. Sanders, for instance, appreciates the solitude. During the interview, he explained how nice it is "out here, because you don't see a lot of people, and when we get busy we don't see each other during the day."[148] But appreciation for the isolation is moderated by the fact that Sanders can escape it at the end of the day.[149] Thanks to cars and modern free-ways, Sanders can work in isolation but live in town, commuting 37 miles from Brigham City to Blue Creek each day. In many aspects, Sanders is like other urban workers. He lives in town alongside white-collar and blue-collar neighbors and commutes to work, but instead of going to the city for an office job, he drives forty-five minutes into the country to work on a farm.

The similarities between Sanders' relation to his rural work space and that of the urban office worker's do not end with the ritual urban commute. In the interview, Sanders explained how people comment that "'it's got to be great working out there in the great

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[146] Kinkead, Ibid., 75-145.
[147] Ibid., 137.
[148] Sanders, Ibid.
[149] Ibid.

outdoors,' people get excited about getting outdoors but I'm out in it all day….It's my office like your office is in an office building."[150] Sanders' comparison of his rural work space to that of an urban office was made in reference to the farm in general, but specifically to the several equipment cabs Sanders occupies in a day—going from truck to tractor to combine (see Figure 8). And the similarities between these equipment cabs and an office cubicle are striking.

For example, both the rural and urban "office space" are equipped with computers and smart phones, which operate on specific software to make the job easier and facilitate communication. Both are environmentally controlled spaces, tractors being equipped with heat and air conditioning, and even a refrigerator for the workers to keep food and drinks in. And both provide entertainment to the office worker through popular radio channels and in some cases television, as the GPS-guided tractor can largely drive itself, and the operator can relax and watch a movie on a portable tablet device.[151] While these might be considered the positive similarities between rural and urban

Figure 8 Combine Cubicle, April 2017 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

"office" spaces, there are negative aspects as well. Rowland Atkinson demonstrates in his article "The Politics of Knowing: Spatial Isolation, Disconnection and Social Withdrawal," how the hyper-connectivity of the modern urban work space generates "newly emergent forms of forced disconnection and isolation," including a withdrawal from the people and material of the work place.[152] This separation of people from people and their work material is apparent in Blue Creek's case. Technology has simplified the landscape for Sanders, enabling him to use time, space, and resources more efficiently, but at the same time it has increased his dependency on the technology, making him less able to read and understand the land without the use of technology. Sanders is isolated from the land while sitting in his windowed cubicle in his truck, tractor, or combine—seeing it through screens and glass walls.

This isolation is exacerbated by Sanders' status as an employee who lives in town. During our conversation Sanders clarified,

> I'm a hired employee, so it's a little different. I still enjoy what I do and still want to do a good job, but there's still a difference between owning your own farm and working for someone else on a farm. Those that own their own farm, I think, have a lot more pride in everything they do. I'm not saying there's not pride here, I mean, where we work for the Church we do like to keep things looking good because people watch us and we do what we can to keep everything nice looking. But there is a distinction between owning [a farm] and working on it.[153]

Sanders' status as an employee makes a difference in his attitude towards the land. The employee mentality encourages Sanders to adopt urban attitudes towards his job—keeping an eight-to-five schedule and wanting to leave work at work—thereby isolating him from the land by decreasing his presence in and awareness of the place. Further

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[152] Rowland Atkinson, "The Politics of Knowing: Spatial Isolation, Disconnection and Social Withdrawal." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 91, no. 4 (2009): 301, 302.

[153] Sanders, Ibid.

highlighting Sanders' alienation from the farm, when I asked if he had a favorite part of the farm, he responded saying, "There's no real favorite part of the farm…[but] I don't like the steep hills," due to the tipping-hazard when operating the equipment. Apparently, from the cab of a truck or tractor, there are only places to be avoided; otherwise one acre of land in 10,000 is all the same.

However, farm employees are not the only ones who experience the isolation an industrial farm entails—the poor and the needy the farm supports are equally removed from the place. Work on the farm is done by the Church employees. Volunteers are recruited during the harvest season, but these people are generally local members who have experience operating farm equipment rather than Church welfare recipients. The farm's remote location and specialized equipment makes it inconvenient and unrealistic to involve welfare recipients in the work, so the Church asks them to volunteer their time at distribution centers or thrift stores in exchange for the food and clothes they receive.[154] In this way, the Church maintains its principles regarding self-reliance and encouraging work and thrift in its welfare recipients, but one wonders if the lessons would be more effectively taught if the people had more direct connection with the farm itself.

Blue Creek's Real and Imagined Interconnections

This critique of the farmer's isolation from the land and the people the land supports, however, is not to say that the work is without meaning—the meaning is just not derived from affection for the land. Instead it is based on a commodified connection to a global economy, which is facilitated through the LDS Church's worldwide presence through welfare and humanitarian services. One of the most useful connections was

[154] Hawks, Ibid.

through the technology that isolated the farmer in the first place. Because of the tractor's GPS capabilities, it is also set up with a direct line of communication to the John Deere Company in Tremonton for mechanical issues and maintenance. This means Sanders can be operating his tractor in the middle of the 10,000 acre farm and without his oversight or intervention, the tractor can monitor itself and notify John Deere when something is wrong mechanically and needs repair. This is one example of what Karen C. Seto, et, al. described as a "teleconnection" (i.e. a social, economic, or environmental factor that invariably influences others, though they are unrelated geographically).[155] These teleconnections, Seto et, al. argue are a manifestation of an area's urbanization, as complex socioeconomic webs are spun to the point where one cannot act in isolation without affecting some other part of the system.[156] In this case, Sanders is linked to John Deere by necessity of technology that is beyond his training to fix, and John Deere is bound to Sanders by the warranty on the machine, which requires them to provide the customer service necessary.

The other very real connection, of course, is service opportunities the farm provides for local communities. Over its 70 years of operation, the welfare farm has been passed around to five different local stakes in terms of stewardship and responsibility to provide volunteer support. During that time volunteers have not only driven trucks, cleaned out storage bins, and hauled rocks from the fields, they have planted over 1000 bushes and trees on the property, built the seasonal house for farm employees, and in times of drought prayed and fasted that rain would come and the welfare farm's crop

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[155] Karen C.Seto, et, al. "Urban Land Teleconnections and Sustainability." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 20 (2012): 7689.

[156] Ibid: 7687.

would be spared.[157] One particularly hard summer, when the crop was burning up under the relentless summer with no rain, Clair Zollinger remembered all five regional stakes fasted for the farm resulting in a timely rain. And while part of the crop was lost, they did not experience a crop failure and never have over the farm's lifetime. In this sense, the welfare farm at Blue Creek created the spiritual community Matthew Maughan observed in his study of welfare farms, becoming a place where "Mormon doctrine [of social welfare], volunteer labor, and community spirit combine" to make a sacred experience and thereby a sacred place on the farm.[158] One other story Zollinger shared highlighted the sacred nature of the farm and its work well. Zollinger remembered one year some rye seed got mixed in with the wheat seed, and the only way to remove it was to walk through the fields and pull them out by hand. This required significant volunteer service over several days, and one day a man came out with his two young sons to help. The smallest child proved more of a hindrance than a help that day and at one point Zollinger asked the father why he had brought the child along. The man responded that he hoped his boys would "learn more from this [service based experience] than any book [on religion] could teach them."[159]

Less personal, but still significant is the contributions the welfare farm makes to welfare and humanitarian services yearly. Though I was not privy to the farm's specific information, Zollinger told me the farm always meets its annual production assignment and often surpasses it. In 2015, the Church reported to have 51 "farm projects"

[157] Zollinger. Ibid.
[158] Maughan, Ibid., 3.
[159] Zollinger. Ibid.

worldwide,[160] which produced approximately 70% of the food supplies necessary to stock the 130 Church storehouses and distributes food to needy Church members and non-members through emergency and humanitarian initiatives.[161] Considering "the Church responded to 177 disasters (natural and man-made) in 56 countries" in 2015 alone, providing food necessities to 96,000 beneficiaries in nine countries, it is quite likely some of the wheat from Blue Creek helped these people.[162]

Figure 9 Welfare Square Grain Silos, September 2017 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

This connection is strengthened for employees and volunteers through experiences like the one offered on Welfare Square (see figure 9).[163] Telling stores of people helped by Church welfare and humanitarian services through video kiosks and guided tours, Welfare Square highlights the ways each of its products is processed and distributed. The guided tour is designed to "reflect the natural flow of production, beginning with food processing and ending where the product is delivered to the

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[160] "Welfare Services Fact Sheet-2015." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. 2015. Accessed 1 May 2017. https://www.lds.org/bc/content/ldsorg/topics/welfare/PD60001924_000_WelfareFactSheet2015.pdf?lang=eng

[161] Sanders, Ibid.

[162] "Welfare Services Fact Sheet-2015" Ibid.

[163] Hawk, Ibid.

patron."[164] By visiting Welfare Square and situating themselves in the larger process, farm employees and volunteers experience what could be termed, corporatism's global effect. As folklorist Lisa Gabbert might hypothesize based on her article "Situating the Local by Inventing the Global," by participating in the Welfare Square tour and talking about the farm's purpose in general terms of supporting the poor and needy, Blue Creek employees and volunteers situate themselves locally "within the broader context of the globalization of capital."[165] In other words, the tour is "a means by which a 'global' is posited or even invented as a point of contrast" to the local farm experience.[166] Doing so imbues the non-profit work at Blue Creek with a globally interconnected sense of place and meaning.

Blue Creek's Isolating and Connective Sense of Place

As a farm devoted to providing welfare support for those in need, it is surprising how little contact the people who work on the farm and those who benefit from the work have with each other. The corporate organization and mechanized systems specifically make it nearly impossible for these people to develop a personal connection and thereby more effective exchange, even though the practical connection is efficiently established by these same means. At best the giver and the receiver can imagine the personable nature of each other through the facilities and tour experience on Welfare Square. Furthermore, the few people left to farm and experience Blue Creek on a daily basis are

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[164] Marie Schildknecht, "New Welfare Square Tour Highlights Church Efforts to Care for Poor" *Church News* 14 December 2015. Accessed 1 May 2015. https://www.lds.org/church/news/new-welfare-square-tour-highlights-church-efforts-to-care-for-poor?lang=eng

[165] Lisa Gabbert, "Situating the Local by Inventing the Global: Community Festival and Social Change." *Western Folklore* 66, no. 3/4 (2007): 264.

[166] Ibid.

being systematically isolated from the place itself through technological advancement driven by efficiency. However, the farm does act as a place for local community members to come together at least two or three times a year to sacrifice their time, making Blue Creek a catalyst for unity and faith-promoting experience. So while the Blue Creek welfare farm can be lonely and apparently placeless, it derives its sense of purpose and meaning through useful and often sacred connections between people mediated by religious ideals of social welfare.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-RELIANCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE: URBAN PARADOX AT THE GARNER FAMILY GARDEN

> I could never [sufficiently] underscore the value of the relationships that have been deepened and strengthened in the garden. It's just a natural harvest of working together and planting something and following it through the whole process to harvesting it and putting it up together. I think it develop[s] layers of connections…that strengthen your relationship with that person and strengthen your relationship with God and your relationship with the world and your relationship with the community…[who all] want to be a part of making that garden successful.
>
> Christy Garner[167]

Twenty-two miles south of Salt Lake City, near the bottleneck of the Salt Lake and Utah valleys is the David and Christy Garner family garden. In terms of LDS agricultural places, this one acre lot cultivated in vegetables, fruits, flowers, and semi-wild plants serves as a model of Mormon family gardens, though by no means typifies them. As a family garden, it is managed by the Garners: David and Christy, and their six children—Richard, Makenna, Ross, Jacob, Jeffery and Tanner—with grandchildren and in-laws taking a role in recent years. However, as one of David and Christy's six children, I can attest that the majority of the work and decision making falls to David and Christy, with seasonal labor needs during planting and harvesting times supplemented by the Garner children and their growing families. The Garners have consistently planted an annual garden on their Bluffdale property for approximately twenty-six years.

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[167] Christy L. Garner, interview by Ross Garner, 4 November 2017, Appendix C, transcript.

In 2006, a picture of the Garner family garden appeared in a LDS Church instruction manual entitled *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* under a chapter entitled "Provident Living: Applying Principles of Self-Reliance and Preparedness" (see Figure 10).[168] This manual was used in the Church's global curriculum, endowing the picture and the garden space with a pedagogical function in the Church's spiritual and religious teachings. Additionally, a picture of the Garner's garden was featured in a *Salt Lake Tribune* article January 25, 2006 reporting on Utah State University's extension services.[169] Though the article did not elaborate on the Garners'

Figure 10 Garner Family Garden with Actors (As seen in *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball).*

[168] Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 114.

[169] Maggie Wolf, "Gardening: Coping Strategies for Land Barons," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Wednesday, January 25, 2006. E8.

gardening methods, it accurately reflected the garden's involvement in community 4-H programs, winning county and state fair competitions consistently each year. Given the garden's appearance in a global teaching manual of the Church and its consistent influence as a place and process on the Garner family and local community over twenty-six years, it serves as an exceptional cultural artifact in understanding Mormon family gardens.

In determining the garden's significance as a cultural landscape, this chapter examines the garden's history and current modes of operation. I begin by reviewing the garden's history as a place defined by self-reliance. Summarizing its growth and development, I explore how other cultural ideas and methods from organics to irrigation have also shaped the physical landscape. I then consider the lived experience of the garden—exploring the garden's sense of boundaries. Lastly, I explore the personal, familial, and communal effects the garden has on the Garners and their neighbors, demonstrating both its self-reliant attributes and the interdependent net of relations that come together to make the garden productive and meaningful. Based on my analysis, this chapter shows how the Garner family garden, like the Blue Creek farm, is a paradoxical place where the foundational motive of self-reliance is defined by interdependent relationships and yields spiritual and practical rewards that are difficult to quantify.

The Garden's History of Self-Reliance

"The Prophet Said to Plant a Garden"

In 1982, the same year David and Christy were married, the Church published a new song by Mary Jane McAllister in its children's song book entitled "The Prophet Said to Plant a Garden."[170] The lyrics read:

> The prophet said to plant a garden, so that's what we'll do.
> For God has given rich brown soil, the rain and sunshine too.
> And if we plant the seeds just right and tend them carefully,
> Before we know, good things will grow to feed our family.
>
> We'll plant the seeds to fill our needs, then plant a few to spare,
> And show we love our neighbors with the harvest that we share.
> Oh won't you plant a garden, too, and share the many joys
> A garden brings in health and love to happy girls and boys.

Inspired by the counsel of President Spencer W. Kimball delivered in General Conference six years earlier, this children's song emphasized the prophet's counsel to "grow as much food as you feasibly can on your own property" in order to keep yourself temporally self-reliant and spiritually whole. This children's song is one of many instructional media produced by the Church and its members to inspire people to grow gardens, promising spiritual strength for obeying the prophet's council even if the garden itself is less successful, but to nevertheless work towards "the day when we will live on what we produce."[171]

As active members of the LDS Church, David and Christy attribute the counsel from Church leaders to garden and be self-reliant as a foundational motive to their garden practices. Presidents Spencer W. Kimball and Ezra Taft Benson were specific leaders they mentioned who were particularly vocal on the topic. In reference to President Kimball's counsel, David reflected, "However large or small, that's what I heard over the pulpit, every family should plant a garden and work together, be self-reliant, and do what

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[170] Mary Jane McAllister, "The Prophet Said to Plant a Garden," *Children's Song Book* Salt Lake City 1982, 237.

[171] Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report*, April 1975: 165.

you could to provide for yourself."[172] Christy shared similar sentiments. When asked if the teachings of the LDS Church influenced how or why they garden, Christy confirmed the Church's counsel "to be self-sufficient" motivated them to garden, but did not affect how they gardened.[173] "We are encouraged to develop the skills and abilities that we need to manage our lives," Christy explained, "so gardening has always been a priority because it has always been encouraged by the brethren to grow as much of your own food as you can and to preserve it and have those skills."[174] Given the emphasis the Church places on home gardening, the Church has developed instructional literature for its members to follow.[175] Some of these pamphlets and tutorials are more helpful than others, but because of their worldwide audience they are limited to giving general advice, suggesting that each member seek out specific direction and help from professional agricultural services in their area.[176]

Family Heritage

In addition to the religious culture they were a part of, both David and Christy were raised around gardens that were not religiously motivated. Growing up in South Carolina, David's parents always grew a garden at his father's insistence. Though not a farmer by profession, David's dad (Thomas Garner) was raised on a 175 acre farm and taught agricultural engineering at Clemson University. So naturally, he grew an

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[172] David W. Garner, interview by Ross Garner, 4 November 2017, Appendix C transcript.

[173] Christy Garner, Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

[175] See *Essentials of Home Production & Storage,* 1978; "Home Gardening" *Duties and Blessing of the Priesthood: Basic Manual for Priesthood Holder, Part B (2000), 139-51;* and "Gardening" https://www.lds.org/topics/gardening?lang=eng.

[176] *Essentials of Home Production & Storage* (Salt Lake City, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), 2.

ambitious garden.[177] Thomas and Cetryu (Trudy) raised their family on ten acres in Seneca, South Carolina with a woodlot, a creek, and pasture, which Thomas gardened with the precision of an engineer. David remembers his dad prizing a new seed-dispenser that rolled along dropping and covering seeds at the optimal depth, and how his dad was meticulous in calculating the square footage of an area he was going to fertilize in order to accurately weigh, mix, and spread fertilizer evenly.[178] However, because of his demanding schedule as a professor, Thomas was necessarily away from home during the times when the work had to be done. By default, this work fell to Trudy and their seven children. David specifically remembered a time when his mother had someone from the county extension office come to their home to teach her how to prune trees. David attributes his basic knowledge of tree pruning to his experience working with his mother and relies on his local extension service now too.[179]

Christy was exposed to gardening at an early age as well. Though neither of her parents gardened, Christy's grandparents and great grandparents on both sides did. One of her earliest memories was working in her grandparent's garden, pulling a stalk of rhubarb out of the ground and eating it with salt.[180] Christy's impression of that garden space was that it was always there, and canning and putting "stuff up was just a part of their life."[181] Because her parents did not garden, Christy took it upon herself to do small horticultural projects around the yard, which formed in her an appreciation for the work.

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[177] Thomas Garner, *Personal History,* 2012: 5.
[178] David Garner, Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Christy Garner, Ibid.
[181] Ibid.

David and Christy's early gardening experiences reflect general agricultural trends and sentiments of their era. Their grandparents, having grown up as farmers during the Great Depression lived principles of thrift, self-sufficiency, and home economy out of habit and necessity. David and Christy's parents, though not strapped with the necessity to garden, maintained a garden when convenient or found ways to involve their kids in extended-family garden projects. Gardening was the culture David and Christy grew up in, and David stressed that this gardening heritage was independent of the Mormon religion. David's dad was a convert to Mormonism and gardened before he joined the Church in his mid-thirties, and Christy's grandparents, who always gardened, were never Mormon. The expectation and value placed on gardening was simply typical of rural life during the time period and when David and Christy were married. They discussed the priorities they wanted to establish for their own family, and gardening was one of those family practices they pursued.

The Garner Family Garden's Early History

David and Christy were married November 26th, 1982 and began their married life in a series of rental properties in the South Salt Lake Valley area. In these basement apartments and elderly-assistant living situations, David remembers trying to grow tomatoes alongside the apartments or homes they were living in, marking the modest beginning of the family's gardening tradition.[182] To supplement these marginal gardens, David and Christy participated in a neighborhood garden. David had an older brother in the neighborhood where they were renting whose in-laws gardened and who invited all extended family members to work and benefit from the harvest. However, as with many

[182] David Garner, Ibid.

such community projects, responsibilities were blurred making the garden difficult to maintain. So when David and Christy bought their own lot in the neighborhood, they discontinued working in the semi-communal garden and planted their own. Christy observed how even though she and David had both been involved in gardening growing up, most of the decision-making and planning had been done by the adults, so when they had their own plot of land, they just started cultivating what they could manage and did not have an "overall vision" guiding their decisions.[183] The garden was an experiment and a product of trial and error.

David worked as a chemical engineer for the rocket propulsion company Hercules (now ATK Thiokol), based in the West Salt Lake Valley area. Though David's company relocated him to South Carolina for two years just after completing their house, the Garners returned to the Bluffdale home towards the end of 1990. Given the demands and instability of starting a new job, the Garners did not plant, or at least did not document their first efforts of gardening on the property until 1992 (see figure 11).[184] Based on the earliest picture of the garden, its rows were

Figure 11 David and Ross Planting The First Garden, April 1992 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

[183] Christy Garner, Ibid.
[184] Daivd Garner, Ibid.

oriented north and south and comprised of summer squash, corn, cabbage, bush beans, and carrots, with a border of colorful zinnias. David and Christy had three children at this point: Richie, Makenna, and Ross—and as the Garner children grew, so did garden. New neighbors building on the lot north of the Garners in 1993 required the bulk of the garden to be moved so that it was all on their side of the property line—shifting south and east to fill the middle section of the acre lot.[185] The original dimensions of this new garden space were approximately 50 feet by 90 feet, with the rows running north to south the length of the garden for two years before reorienting them to run east to west for more convenient access (see Figure 12).[186] Here the garden has remained for the past 25 years, though it has continued to evolve and expand.

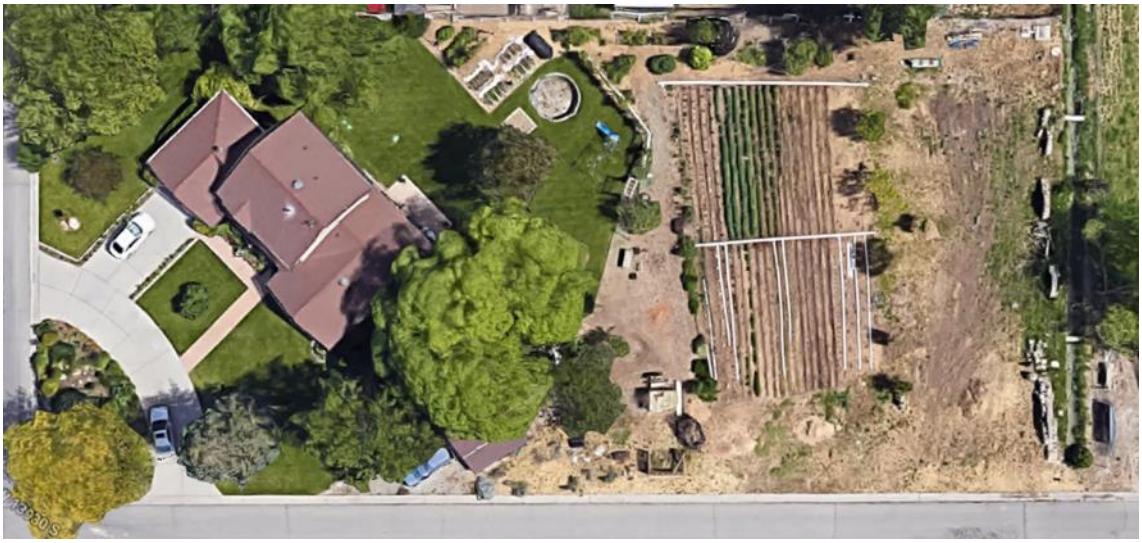

Figure 12 Garner Family Garden, Spring 2017 (Courtesy Google Maps).

[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

Watering Methods

Even though the early canal system had established an irrigation ditch along the east side of the Garner's property, they did not utilize the secondary water source initially to water their garden. Rather, they used a system of soaker-hoses hooked up to their culinary water system from an outdoor faucet. These soaker hoses were made of a black porous material that allowed water to seep through when under pressure, and worked well for the Garners—watering only where the water was needed and saturating the specific area thoroughly. The Garner's use of the culinary water through a hose system rather than the secondary water through an irrigation system speaks to their initial urban preferences. As historian Leonard Arrington has observed, "putting water evenly in beneficial amounts over [a crop]…requires the accumulation of a significant body of knowledge and experience, as sophisticated in its own way as the engineering knowledge needed to lay out and build the initial delivery system."[187] David and Christy did not initially have this knowledge, so they opted for the easily controlled and convenient method a city's water system afforded. Unfortunately for the Garners, soaker-hoses tend to weaken under the constant pressure, creating holes where the hoses were kinked while in storage, resulting in decreased watering efficiency and soil erosion.[188] So, after many years of working with patched soaker-hoses and new, yet inferior ones, the Garners determined to make a major change to their watering and thereby gardening method.

Prior to looking for a solution to soaker-hose issues, the Garners had been motivated by economic and environmental reasons to conserve culinary water. In the year

[187] Leonard Arrington and Dean May, "A Different Mode of Life:" Irrigation and Society in Nineteenth-Century Utah" *Agricultural History* 49 no. 1. (1975): 11.
[188] Christy, Ibid.

2000, Utah was one of the five fastest growing states in the nation, but it was also one of the driest—making water conservation a priority.[189] Though the Garners were admittedly more interested in cutting down on their water bill than conserving water, they decreased their dependence on the culinary water supply by investing in a gas powered trash pump, hundreds of feet of four inch hose, and plastic pipes to flood irrigate their lawn from the secondary water source.[190] Thus equipped with the necessary tools and some experience in controlling flood-waters, when the Garners began having major issues with their soaker-hoses system they were ready to irrigate the garden as well. In 2010, after eighteen years favoring one system, the Garners reconfigured their garden to accommodate their new watering method.

Figure 13 Early Summer Garden with New Watering Method, Summer 2012 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

Returning the garden to its original orientation, with rows running north to south, David installed a 50 foot by 8 inch pipe along the north side of the garden. With a cap on one end and small gates every 30 inches

[189] Gregory L. Richards, Michael C. Johnson, and Steven L. Barfuss. "Metering Secondary Water in Residential Irrigation Systems." *Journal (American Water Works Association)* 100, no. 6 (2008): 112-21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41312908.

[190] David, Ibid. (Though flood irrigating does not actually conserve water overall, it does reduce the use of potable water and the resources expended in water treatment plants).

to allow the water to run down along the rows, David pumped the water from the ditch through the pipe and down the rows (see Figure 13). In addition to changing the garden's orientation, this required major regrading of the soil to create a slope to help the water reach the end of the row. It also changed how the Garners planted their seeds. With the soaker hoses, they had dug shallow troughs with a hoe to keep the water pooled on the plants, but with flood irrigation, if they planted in the troughs, it would erode and wash the seeds away. So the Garners had to plant their seeds on the peaks of earth while the water ran in the valleys and soaked into the mounds on either side. This is considered "furrow irrigation," which is one of several surface irrigation methods used "to manage irrigation toward higher efficiencies" by a direct and independent flow of water down each trough.[191] Several of David and Christy's neighbors used this method in their gardens, but the Garner's method was unique in its use of a pump to push the water to the ends of the rows instead of simply leaving gravity to do its work, making it an "automated furrow system."[192]

Back to Eden: Permaculture

However, shortly after the Garner's switched to this new watering method, they decided to make another major change to their garden. As a member of several health and garden email networks, Christy was introduced to a method of gardening developed by Paul Gautschi called "Back to Eden."[193] This gardening method tried to imitate the nature's ability to create humus, an older term for soil organic matter, by providing a

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[191] R. S. Varshney, "Modern Methods of Irrigation." *GeoJournal 35 no. 1 1995. 59-63. (60)*

[192] Ibid.

[193] Paul Gautschi, "Back to Eden," *YouTube,* https://www.backtoedenfilm.com/watchfreeorganicgardeningmovie.html.

constant covering of the soil with a layer of fine wood chips and other organic matter.[194] Gautschi suggests that nature's propensity to cover itself is by divine design, saying "God has designed it, and made it so that it is always covered with something."[195] This method is supposed to require less water and maintenance, as the layer of wood chips helps decrease the loss of water through evaporation and smothers unwanted weed seeds.[196] The gardening method is considered a form of permaculture, which is defined as "the development or maintenance of an artificial ecosystem intended to be self-sustaining and to satisfy the living requirements of its inhabitants, especially by the use of renewable resources."[197] Though the Garners had access to plenty of water through the secondary water system, Christy felt that if there ever was a drought, the back-to-Eden method would allow them to continue to grow a successful garden and therefore, be more self-reliant.[198] Furthermore, Christy described Gautschi as "a man of God that is very familiar with the Bible and God," whose teaching "resonated with [her] spirit and…with the idea of making the land sustainable."[199] So, in addition to the practical incentives to conserve water and chase fewer weeds, the back-to-Eden gardening method was spiritually motivated.

Consequently, in 2011, the Garners hauled in several tons of compost and wood chips to spread over their garden. They spread the compost four inches thick over the whole garden to provide a fertile seed bed and give the development of humus a head

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[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid 8:08-8:18.
[196] Christy Garner, Ibid.
[197] "Permaculture," Oxford English Dictionary. Accessed 9 April 2018, http://www.oed.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/view/Entry/242398?redirectedFrom=permaculture#eid.
[198] Christy Garner, Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

start. This layer of compost was then covered with four inches of wood chips. When the Garners were ready to plant, they raked the wood chips aside to plant the seeds directly in the compost, moving the bark back only when the seeds had sprouted and the plants sufficiently matured. True to its claims, the back-to-Eden method eliminated major weed management, and after several years had a noticeable impact on the soil quality, though it did not prove as efficient in its promise of effective water distribution and conservation.

Though Gautschi might suggest his spiritualized gardening methods that employ prayer and meditation as much as observation and imitation of nature are somewhat original, he seems to borrow from several alternative agricultural traditions, including bio-dynamics and organics. Based on a series of lectures by Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), bio-dynamic agriculture "is a procedure that is founded not only on modern knowledge but also on a modern attitude to knowledge that includes the spiritual."[200] More specifically, "the bio-dynamic approach is based on an understanding…of the interrelationships of living organisms and the processes that make up the ecological system, embracing forces working within plants, the soil and from the surrounding universe."[201] Similar to bio-dynamics, Gautschi takes an inherently spiritual approach to the practical issue of raising food in a balanced, sustainable way; but Gautschi vocabulary and primary sources for his theories are explicitly Christian as he frequently references the Bible and God in his videos. Bio-dynamics, on the other hand, is irreligious, focusing instead on the physical and spiritual interconnectivity of the universe.

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[200] Herbert H. Koepf, *Bio-Dynamic Agriculture: An Introduction*. (Spring Valley, The Anthroposophic Press, 1976): 30.

[201] Ibid. 31.

Gautschi's relation to organics is equally relevant. Though not particularly religious or spiritual, American organics began with a crusade-mentality to reform what was considered a chemically drenched, nutrient-deficient, environmentally destructive agricultural system, and replace it with a holistic, interdependent, compost-based agriculture to improve soil and human health.[202] Since its beginnings in the 1940s, however, organic agriculture has adopted many of the corporate models it originally criticized, and many, including Gautschi, question the integrity of industrial organic practices. In this sense, Gautschi would fit in more comfortably with the "beyond organic" movement that insists on higher environmental and ethical standards than the USDA's organic label certifies.[203] Nevertheless, Gautschi's philosophical forbearers can clearly be traced back to men like Albert Howard, J. I. Rodale, and Masanobu Fukuoka who stressed the importance of imitating and working with nature, though again, not with such a religious vocabulary.[204]

Adapting the Irrigation System

Because the back-to-Eden method required a constant covering of loose organic matter, it made flood irrigating difficult for the Garners. The pressurized flow of water washed the wood chips away each irrigation turn, requiring significant time and energy after watering to rake the woodchips back to cover the exposed soil. Wanting to eliminate this labor and to truly prove the method's ability to use less water, the Garners adapted their secondary water supply to a sprinkler irrigation system. The sprinkler system did indeed eliminate erosion and labor issues as the Garners did not have to replace

[202] Robin O'Sullivan, *American Organic: A Cultural History of Farming, Gardening, Shopping, and Eating.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2015): 30, 102.
[203] Ibid.. 138; Gautschi Ibid.
[204] O'Sullivan, Ibid.: 17, 21, 111.

woodchips or tend the water during watering turn, but it brought its own unique set of problems. The initial installation cost of an electric pump that was adaptable to a sprinkler system was significant, but the system's inability to effectively water the Garner's diverse repertoire of crops was another. A major crop the Garners plant is corn, which grows up to seven or eight feet. This creates an effectual wall that blocks the sprinkler from reaching all the corn rows and any other vegetables on the other side of the corn. Also, some plants needed more water than others, but the undiscriminating sprinkler could only dole out equal water portions to each area. Furthermore, the Garners could not use the sprinkler with the irrigation water to water the entire garden, because the water was very alkaline and would burn the plant foliage of melon, cucumber, and raspberry plants.[205]

Figure 14 Spring Garden with "Back to Eden" Approach, May 2017 (Courtesy Ross Garner).

To circumvent these issues, the Garners tried another new watering method that was similar to soaker-hoses called drip tape, but once again, they were disappointed. Drip tape is long plastic tubing with perforated holes for the pressurized water to leak through. But apparently the product was not developed for secondary water, as the product got

[205] Christy Garner, Ibid.

clogged up by algae from the canal, in spite of filters on the pump. The drip tape method lasted one season. Not knowing what else to do and having concerns about the wood chips decomposing too slowly and binding up the nitrogen in the soil, the Garners decided to revert back to flood irrigating, keeping the woodchips that were left on the garden, but not worrying about how much they got moved around and not adding new woodchips to the covering (see Figure 14). The results were encouraging: the harvest of 2017 being one of the most productive in about six years.

Water has been and continues to be a major determining factor in how the Garners garden, but it is not the only variable. They have also made changes in sprays and fertilizers they use, beginning with the standard chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers and transitioning to organic alternatives. The transition has been frustrating at times, and the Garners have had to get creative in how they control weeds around the perimeter of the garden and supplement their plants with the right minerals to have healthy plants and productive yields. But by drowning out the weeds in wood chips and using a combination of root stimulating microbial fertilizers and essential mineral blends, the Garners have managed to overcome the major obstacles in transitioning to an organic garden.

Gardening Tools

Throughout this evolution of gardening methods, the Garners have used different equipment and tools for their evolving tasks. Besides the standard gardener's tools like the hoe, pitchfork, shovel, rake, wheelbarrow, and pruning shears, the Garners' have invested in more expensive mechanical and power tools to make the work easier. In the early stages of the garden, they used a walk-behind rototiller to prepare the seed beds and

work the compost, leaves, and other garden waste into the soil. Later, they invested in a Ford tractor with plow and till implements for the same purpose. However, these tillage tools often left the already lumpy clay soil cloddier than before.[206] Transitioning to the back-to-Eden method was supposed to transform this soil into fine black humus through its no-till practices, but doing so would render the tractor obsolete. So the Garners invested in a wood chipper that could connect to the tractor's power take-off drive (PTO) so they could chip their own limbs to cover their garden, rather than buying it by the ton at the green waste facility. In 2017, they also bought a small shredder to help break down the leaves they collect each fall.

These investments and adaptations of tools are geared toward making the garden more independent. As David and Christy's oldest son, Richie, put it, "There is no place else. It's all here. It comes from here and it stays here."[207] Branches pruned from the fruit and shade trees are chipped up and used as a weed barrier; and compost bins are used to digest garden and kitchen waste before being put back into the soil. There is some waste the Garners are unable to process efficiently like corn stalks, which they take to the county's green waste facility or give to neighbors with horses, but even then Christy feels it's not going to waste and might find its way back to the garden in a load of purchased compost or free horse manure.

As of 2017, the newest equipment investment the Garners have made is a 14 by 100 foot hoop house. The Garners have a small 8 by 5 foot green house where they start the plants that they transplant, but they invested in the domed structure that is easily

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[206] Christy Garner, Ibid.

[207] Richard Garner, interview by Ross Garner, 4 November 2017, Appendix C, transcript.

assembled and taken down to extend their growing season. They are experimenting with small hearty crops like lettuce, spinach, broccoli, and radishes in the hoop house throughout the winter and hope to master green winter salads.

Each of these investments in equipment and experiments in methods was motivated by the Garner's desire to follow a prophet's counsel to be more self-reliant and decrease labor without also decreasing productivity. Together, these motives combined in interesting ways and embedded themselves in the garden's landscape.

Experiencing the Garden and Its Sense of Dependence

Rediscovering the Garden

Unlike my somewhat frustrating experience contacting and visiting the farm at Blue Creek, my path to the Garner family garden was as open and inviting as returning home—because it was home. My parents, David and Christy Garner, were more than willing to listen to the explanation of my project and be interviewed, giving me full range of the garden and its records to explore and document. But the openness and familiarity of the place brought its own set of challenges to the work.

First was the sense that I needed to justify my scholarly interest in my parents' home and garden as a cultural artifact. I was self-conscious about my project when explaining it to friends and colleagues, imagining their skepticism regarding the academic rigor of my degree. But I took comfort from, and scholarly assurance in, the precedent of writer and activist Alice Walker's work on her early family spaces. In the wake of multicultural scholarship that questioned the exclusive study of highbrow art and literature, Walker suggests in her book *In Search of Our Mothers' Garden* that meaning

exists in marginalized spaces—that we need look no further than our mother's gardens to find "the Art that is [their] gift," which we ought to appreciate and understand.[208]

The other problem I faced was my proximity to my parents' garden. Personally, I worried I did not have enough emotional distance from the place and people to do my job as an academic and engage in accurate cultural analysis and criticism. My years at the university and traveling abroad helped me contextualize my home experience within broader economies and cultural trends, but rather than drive me away, they reinforced my interest in my parent's way of life—specifically their agricultural pursuits. Could I, then, objectively view the lifestyle I believed in and place I was personally invested in and portray it accurately to a skeptical audience? Fortunately, academia has come to recognize that the completely objective scholar is non-existent. According to cultural historian Richard L. Bushman, "all sorts of people these days are advocates of the subject they write about—feminists, African Americans, historians of liberalism, historians of the left"—they all believe in their causes.[209] Therefore, "the problem of writing believing history is not naiveté, but constraint" in keeping the competing perspectives balanced.[210] Judgment on whether I achieved that balance, of course, is up to the reader, recognizing I still have to live with these people and places I analyze.

Once I recognized the biases I would need to balance and the preconceptions I would likely need to question, I visited my family's garden determined to rediscover the cultural experiences and environmental lessons it had to offer.

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[208] Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," *In Search of Our Mothers' Garden*s (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1973): 241.

[209] Bushman, *Believing History,* 280.

[210] Ibid.

Visiting the Garden: Exposure and Boundaries of Meaning

My initial impression of the garden was its sense of openness. Comprising a corner lot, the Garner's property is exposed on two sides and is not fenced-in. Neighbors have put up fences along the property lines bordering the Garners, but these do not inhibit the street-view, allowing convenient pedestrian, vehicular, and voyeuristic access to all parts of the property. The only buffers were natural or cultivated—a clump of sagebrush, a scattered orchard and a trellis of grapes.

The lack of barrier communicated several things. One is the value of convenience and accessibility. Though the garden is aesthetically pleasing, its primary purpose is to be functional. The Garners do not keep any animals besides an indoor dog and honey bees, so there is no need to contain the space, and their frequent use of trucks, trailers, and tractors to complete tasks around the property would make fencing a nuisance. Additionally, the garden's openness suggests a sense of display; the Garners do not fence in their yard because they want to show it off. While this might accurately be viewed as an expression of pride and a marker of conspicuous production and obedience in a neighborhood of Mormons who have all been counseled to garden by the same Church leaders, the Garners insist the opposite is true. Gardens are meant to be enjoyed, and if they fenced everything in it would restrict the enjoyment of the neighborhood. Therefore, keeping the garden open to the access and admiration of others is more selfless than keeping it to oneself—showing it off only to invited guests.

In recent years there has been some incentive to keep intruders out. In 2017, a migrating deer population stripped the bark off young fruit trees during a long winter, and the Garners have frequently had portions of their front flower beds run-over by careless

drivers. But these incentives, as yet, have not replaced the convenience of a fenceless property nor justified the cost to build a wall.

As previously mentioned, the Garners' property is divided in several sections representing the stages of its evolution. Immediately around the house on the western third part of their property, the land is comprised of Kentucky blue grass, flower beds, and ornamental or shade trees. These places are referred to simply as the front, side, or back yards, with the main flower-bed in the front yard deemed "the island" because it is surrounded by asphalt and concrete. The grass and tree area was the Garner kids' play area, with a sandbox, trampoline, swing-set and tree swings as permanent features of the landscape. The transition between the recreational yard to the garden is both subtle and abrupt. Fruit trees are and have always been part of backyard, and grow boxes were formerly used to grow strawberries in between the trees. As the property has matured, the line between the yard and garden space became more distinct with the addition of plastic edging and the crowding out of fruit by the large shade trees. Two rather marginal fruit trees remain in the yard, but the Garners have consolidated their fruit-bearing plants to a specific production area beyond the borders of grass. This area is simply called, "the garden." A grape trellis separates the backyard play area from the garden and has an arbor at one end, though there is open access to the garden beyond the arbor. This is the only formalized, controlled entrance to the garden and performs an aesthetic rather than functional purpose—flowers, not grapes grow up the sides of the arbor. Though the arbor is conveniently placed near the garden's water faucet along a natural path to the garden from the house, other access points are used just as frequently for convenience sake,

somewhat diminishing the symbolic entrance to and exit from the garden suggested by the arbor.

The garden itself is a variable place, characterized by the season. My first look at it from an academic perspective was the spring of 2017 on the first day of watering. The irrigation ditch, acting as the property line between neighbors, ran along the east border of the lot. Stripped of its vegetation to streamline the flow of water, the bearer of the garden's life was devoid of any life of its own. Pumping the water some fifty feet to the woodchip-covered garden, David worked with pipe and hose to direct the water down rows of peas, carrots, and herbs. Later in the year, as the plants developed, the woodchips visual dominance of the space would be masked by the green foliage of a small food forest as vine, stalk, and bush covered the land. Crawling through the woodchips beneath the shade of the plants is a robust population of spiders, centipedes, worms, and insects, working with their microbial cousins to break down the wood and other organic matter. The garden rows run north and south, and are unshaded, though some fruit trees are planted around the west, north, and east perimeters. The north end of the garden is dominated by permanent raspberry, blackberry, and elderberry bushes and intermittent fruit trees; the west perimeter is devoted to permanent herb patches, and the east side is dedicated to fruit trees. The south end of the garden faces the road and is left open, covered only with a thick layer of wood chips. Christy refers to this place as "the palate" as it is where much of the prep work for the garden is done. A small green house is located here along with a compost pile and a wide open space to stage the truck, trailer, and any piles of compost to be spread.

Beyond this formal garden space is a semi-wild area. Sagebrush, grass, and cottonwood trees used to dominate this section of the property, and stood in stark contrast to the cultivated garden space. But over the years, the brush and trees have mostly died off, leaving the grass and other weeds to take over. Christy preferred the semi-wildness, but now that things have died off the Garners plan to turn it into a permaculture area with more fruit bearing trees, bushes, and useful herbs.

Dependence on Nature, Economy, and Community

In spite of growing more than fifty different types of fruits, vegetables, and herbs; composting significant portions of their waste; and extending their growing season with greenhouses; the Garners recognize the limits to their self-reliance. "We're not dependent on our garden to eat," Christy explained, "we have money to go buy [food]." But Christy believes nature has important things to teach her spiritually that can only be learned when she is dependent on it to grow her food. She explains, "We pray that [the garden] will be productive. We pray that it will be protected from the frost. That doesn't mean it always is, and that doesn't mean that I don't have enough faith, it just means that it is nature, and nature has its own role in teaching us things."[211] This chosen and accepted dependence on nature has its frustrations and failures, but Christy believes those failures bring important life lessons for herself and her children, as the garden is a safe place to fail.

However, the garden provides this sense of safety in failure because David's job adequately provides for their needs. While the prophet's counsel to grow as much food as possible is a noble idea, the reality is most urban or suburban dwellers that have lucrative day jobs do not feel the same pressure to perform well agriculturally. The Garners feel

[211] Christy Garner, Ibid.

like they take the prophet's admonition more seriously than most, but even then they recognize that were they forced to live only on what they produce themselves they would have to make significant changes to make themselves truly self-reliant. Furthermore, the Garners recognize their dependence on their neighbors for produce and services they cannot provide themselves. Though the Garners plant everything they want to have and preserve, each year they seem to glean some crop from a neighbor's garden or orchard to supplement their needs. However, because they are equally willing to share with others, they do not see it as dependence—just interdependence.

The Garden's Sacred Relationships

The Individual and God

Gardens have always been viewed as semi-sacred spaces, especially in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Garner's garden is no different. According to Christy, "the garden is a very sacred place," and its holiness comes from the spiritual experiences and relationships it facilitates. For Christy personally, working in the garden brings her peace. "My characteristic as a person tends to be more high strung and pushy," Christy confesses. "And so, when I can have time to work in the garden and just be in nature, hear the birds sing and be aware of the soil…the temperature…the moisture content, it helps me be present" and focus on the physical task at hand. It also is a major source of joy for Christy, giving her what she calls "sacred delights." From witnessing the "miracle" of plants sprouting, filling out, and bearing fruit, to watching her nieces, nephews, and grandchildren's excitement at unearthing red potatoes or finding fat pea pods on the vine, Christy finds a lot of "joyous moments." In a sense, the garden facilitates spirituality. Christy explained:

> As members of the Church, we are taught to do things that help cultivate the spirit in our lives. Practices like personal prayer, personal scripture study, family scripture study, Church worship, and temple attendance, all those things cultivate the spirit in our lives and our ability to listen to the spirit. And we feel like all truth and knowledge comes from God and He knows that we are trying to raise a family up to Him who will serve His children and forward His work here on the earth. So, if we can utilize working the land to help teach our children some of those lessons and provide them with skills that help them manage their own life better, to that end the garden helps us a lot.

By comparing gardening to religious acts like prayer, scripture study, and Sunday worship, Christy demonstrates the religious perspective with which she approaches her work and shows that it is not solely a practical endeavor, but a tool to teach her children and herself significant spiritual lessons.

Of course, the feelings of joy and holiness are always tempered by the garden's frustrations. Christy admits she has what she refers to as "Tevia moments" when she complains to God of natural forces that seem to work against her.[212] Though she recognizes that they do not rely on their garden the same way people used to, Christy explains how when you put your sweat and tears into a project and then a frost kills the blossoms, or seeds do not germinate, or plants simply refuse to bear fruit in spite of their apparent health, she cannot help but question heaven. Christy recognizes the value of these experiences as they teach her important lessons of faith and humility—for when one of the crops fails in spite of her best efforts, she recognizes some things are out of her control and believes that God will "provide other resources" through neighbors or good deals at the store to help them get by.[213] Corroborating Christy's sentiments on the garden, historian Tamara Fritze explains how "women perceive their gardens as having

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[212] Christy Garner, Ibid. (In reference to the main character in "The Fiddler on the Roof" who frequently complained out loud to God as he worked)

[213] Ibid.

multiple cultural functions," including "psychological sustenance."[214] Spending time in the garden helps Christy process the problems of the garden, which she relates to the frustrations of life, and this interaction with her garden turns it into a "living entit[y] that bind[s] the gardeners to their place."[215]

David shares similar sentiments as Christy, explaining how "it's always a spiritual place" because "the garden is a microcosm of life."[216] For David, facilitating and witnessing the life cycles in the garden is an end in itself, explaining, "I think all the plants have spirits…a purpose in life, and they are fulfilling their purpose and they just need a little help."[217] David sees particularly interesting parallels between life and pruning fruit trees, anthropomorphizing trees to a degree as he talks about the "choices that trees make to put out branches that need to be pruned," explaining how sometimes people overextend themselves in pursuit of education, careers, or other activities and need to be restrained and humbled to a degree. Interestingly, the garden acts as a self-imposed restraint or pruning mechanism for David, as he mentions how garden work is "never convenient, but when you have to make the world stop to do something that has to happen when it has to happen, you just kind of leave the cares of the world and do it."[218] Another metaphor for a successful life that David mentioned was in harvesting peas. "If you find one pea that's ripe," David said, "you'll find another one on the same vine that's ripe, too." So, too, in life, if a person has one meaningful or successful experience it is a

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[214] Tamara Fritze, Growing Identity, Growing a Home: Contrasting Functions of Two Nineteenth-century Gardens," *Studies in the History of Garden & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2002): 335.

[215] Ibid.

[216] David Garner, Ibid.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid.

hint or a clue that perhaps this could lead to more opportunities and perhaps one's life work.[219]

Family Relationships

In addition to these personal life lessons the garden teaches, the garden is also seen as a place that helps build interpersonal relationships among family members and develops kids into responsible adults. A parenting philosophy that David and Christy subscribe to is "the idea that children will be less likely to get into problems if they have constructive work to do" and for them the "garden was a great venue for that to happen." But not only did it keep their kids out of trouble, it taught them how to be responsible, that "sometimes you just have to do what has to be done, whether you want to do it or not," because the life of plants and animals depends on you. Specific tasks that demanded this kind of attention were feeding and watering the chickens, especially when it was cold, and helping with the garden watering, which often occurred in the middle of the night because of the irrigation schedule. These demanding tasks definitely demonstrate the commitment and discipline required, but the garden also taught important lessons of choice and accountability.

Christy recalled a specific experience working with their youngest child, Tanner. She explained how during the summer, the kids, but Tanner particularly, understandably liked to sleep in. But when there was work to do in the garden and hot summer days made conditions miserable to work in, Christy wanted to get out and get the work done before it got too hot, but believed it was more important to do the work alongside her son. So, she waited for Tanner to get up and went out with him in the heat of the day to do the

[219] Ibid.

weeding. Predictably, Tanner began complaining about having to work in the heat and Christy began a discussion with him "about life choices and how the choices we make determine our comfort and happiness in life. And sometimes what we think is harder, like getting up earlier, is really easier…than being out when it is so hot and miserable."[220] In this case, the garden gave Christy the opportunity to teach what she felt was an important lesson, but only because she was willing to work and be miserable in the heat alongside Tanner, which was another parenting philosophy of hers. She didn't just "send [her] kids out to work by themselves. [She] felt like if [she] was going to teach them a principle and if they were going to do the work right [she] needed to be there with them." In this sense, Christy views the garden as an ideal teaching venue and tool, describing it as a "humbling [and] safe" place where the family feels "more free to discuss things that [they] might not otherwise."[221]

It is difficult to measure the maturity of adults and assess how well they learned the lesson their parents thought they taught them. But if the lessons a new generation of adults teach their children is any indication of their growth, the Garner kids seem to have been paying attention. Richie is the oldest and most established of the Garner siblings. Married to Rachel Crosby, they have four kids, a home and yard of their own in Riverton, Utah, with chickens, rabbits, fruit trees, and a small vegetable garden. As young parents, Richie says he and Rachel are "always looking for ways to teach them [their kids] principles and help them be moral people, hardworking people, contributing people—whether it's on our land or not." Richie feels constrained by his time as a high school religion teacher and only having a quarter acre lot, so he supplements their limited ability

[220] Christy Garner, Ibid.
[221] Ibid.

to garden on their own property by taking his kids to his parents garden to help with big projects and also volunteers with them at a local farm to give them the empowering, confidence building, hard work experiences he had growing up.

Makenna is the second oldest, and is married to Ian James. Together, they have three boys and rent a home in Salt Lake City. There, they have some property to garden, growing tomatoes, kale, and peppers in raised boxes. When asked why she thought her parents gardened, Makenna responded that besides the obvious reasons of wanting to raise fresh food and trying to be self-reliant as the Church asked them to, "the bonding time that it required for all of us to be out there [gardening] obviously made us a stronger family than a lot of other families we saw." Makenna further explained how she "wanted to re-create that for [her] family," but how difficult it is because they do not own their own land. The grow boxes are about as much as they can do given their circumstance, and as the boxes are easily maintained they do not provide enough work for her three boys. "No matter what I do, there's not enough stuff around this house and this city to teach them how to work hard" Makenna explains. But she looks forward to a day when they will have some property and can provide that opportunity for their family. The remaining four Garner children are landless, living in apartments during their college years, but return to help with the family garden when school or work schedules permit.

The rewards of gardening, generally stated above, were familial bonding and personal discipline. But the specific events Richie and Makenna remember as bonding moments are important to note as well. For instance, the Garner kids developed games they played while they worked. When picking peas or beans, which required being hunched over the low bushes for long periods of time, the kids played name-that-tune.

One person would think of a song, usually from the Disney movies or Hollywood musicals they watched, and hum or whistle the first few notes of the song and make the others guess. Richie remembered starting dirt clod or rotten tomato wars when ripping out the garden at the end of the season, even smacking the tomatoes with a tennis racket to create a spray effect. Watering the lawn was also a fun event when it took place in the middle of the day, as the kids could play in the cool water on hot days. A more productive, efficiency-driven game grew out of harvesting tomatoes and the boys' love of football. One person would stand at a central location on the tomato row with the bushel basket, and the other boys would pick at different places along the row and throw the ripe tomatoes to the person by the bushel basket. This required an accurate arm and soft hands to harvest the fruit without bruising them. It was not always successful, but more fun.

Community Relationships

While the major impact of the garden was on the Garners as individuals and a family, its influence extends to the local neighborhood as well. The first visible way the garden touches the community is its aesthetic quality. The Garners live on a corner lot without fences, exposing the majority of their property and the whole of their garden to a view from the road. Christy mentioned how it is not unusual for neighbors or even strangers to slow down as they drive past the garden and to stop and talk if they are outside working, especially when they started making changes to their watering system and then the Back to Eden method. Christy credits part of this to the fact that several other people garden in the neighborhood, though not to the same extent they do, and the neighbors want to talk about how certain crops are doing and what methods work best. And for those neighbors who do not garden, but still stop to talk about it, Christy believes

people “in the community…want to be a part of making the garden successful,” so they stop to praise it or ask if they can bring their leaves and grass clippings to compost for the fall. Christy and David both attest to the garden’s role in connecting with neighbors they might not have otherwise had an opportunity to get to know.

Another reason why neighbors might feel interested and excited to contribute in small ways to the garden is the free produce they sometimes get from it throughout the year. Unable to eat or preserve all the produce they grow each year, the Garners frequently share their surplus with their neighbors. When the Garner kids were at home, Christy would send them around with a little red wagon loaded with buckets of summer squash, cucumbers, and sometimes peppers. They would go door to door and give the neighbors what they wanted. During years with a particularly good tomato crop after Christy had put up all that she wanted to preserve, she would invite neighbors to pick the rest. And now that her kids are gone, Christy often invites interested neighbors over to learn how to can specific fruits or vegetables and has organized several formal cooking classes to demonstrate bread making, herbal medicine, and other health oriented home economy activities. She does this based on popular demand and as a way to give back to the community that taught her to do those things in the first place.

The Garden’s Self-Reliant and Interdependent Sense of Place

Christy and David’s efforts in their garden and desire to extend the benefits of the garden beyond themselves and their family to the community reflect the garden’s self-reliant and interdependent sense of place. Self-reliance may have motivated the garden’s initiation and continues to play a role in the Garner’s enduring commitment to it, but interdependence transcends self-reliance as the Garners realize how dependent they are

on urban economics, their local community, and nature itself to be successful in the endeavor. David's job ensures the garden remains a safe place to fail and teach important life lessons, the neighborhood gives to and takes from the garden in mutually beneficial ways, and nature necessarily makes all of it possible and demands close attention if the Garners want to reap the benefits. So, while the Mormon religious value of self-reliance may have been the instigating idea of this cultural landscape, it is by no means the single or dominant value. However, rather than view this as a failure of the self-reliance initiative, Mormons should see this as fulfillment of the principle's original intent. As demonstrated in chapters I and II, original Mormon ideas of self-reliance leaned heavily toward the communal rather than individual application of the principle, and while group self-reliance in the intermountain west was never fully realized, the effort serves as a cautionary reminder to proponents of rugged individualism in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER V

THE FARM AND GARDEN'S FUTURES: TOWARDS AN INSPIRED LAND ETHIC

> And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
>
> Genesis 1:28

> And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.
>
> D&C 59:20

What is the sense of place of Mormon agricultural landscapes? If the study of place teaches anything, it is that there cannot be a universal answer to this question. Institutional structures might be identical and the cultural context might be similar, but as the infinitely variable combinations of individuals, local geography, and the web of institutions and communities surrounding a place shape it, any definition must be tailored to the specific place and people. Therefore, the question should be amended to be more specific: What is the sense of place on the Blue Creek Utah Crops welfare farm and the Garner Family Garden respectively? And what do these places reveal about Mormon culture?

In forming partial answers to these questions, this thesis has examined the industrially scaled corporate welfare farm at Blue Creek, UT and the Garner Family Garden in Bluffdale, UT, which are both subsidiary cultural products of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Contextualized within American agrarian traditions, these modern case studies of Mormon agrarian landscapes reveal their paradoxical senses of place defined by experiences of social welfare, isolation, and interconnection; and self-

reliance, dependence, and interdependence. However, as set forth in the introduction, these places are not static, but are continually developing and changing. Therefore, this chapter considers the current issues of concern faced by the welfare farm and family garden, the possible futures of both landscapes, and how their senses of place may develop and be expressed.

Blue Creek's Technological Future

Because the Blue Creek welfare farm is part of the corporate structure of the Church, its foreseeable future is as indefinite as the organization's. Since its founding in 1830 with only six official members, the Church has grown to a membership of over 15.8 million members as of 2016, with the majority of them living outside of the United States. This expansion of membership necessitates the expansion of social services through the Church's welfare program, and the Blue Creek farm has grown accordingly. Beginning with just over 2200 acres in 1940, the welfare farm has absorbed five neighboring farms since then, making the total acreage around 10,000 acres. This expansion has required the mechanization of farm work, and the Church has invested in new and larger equipment as the technology has developed.

In spite of the farm's non-profit status, these expansions and technological investments were motivated by the usual market factors of efficiency. Because the Church uses donation funds for these agricultural endeavors, which are regarded as sacred, it is highly motivated to use those funds wisely. Unfortunately, "wisely" has been interpreted to mean, "that which decreases inputs and increases yields," making the farm adopt more of a business model than a conservation-based non-profit model. As a result, Blue Creek is given a quota based on previous yields and current needs from the

Church's corporate center in Salt Lake City, which it must meet consistently in order to justify its continued operation. The farm has regularly surpassed the quota, suggesting the farm will be around indefinitely, but it does not ensure the application of sustainable practices.

The farm's sense of permanence is significant given the Church's international vision. With the majority of its membership living outside of the United States, the Church has taken a decidedly global vision for future welfare development. With significant agricultural projects in Australia, Brazil, and England, the Church has been repurposing or selling less productive farms in the western United States to invest in similar international locations. Because of Blue Creek's size and efficiency, it does not have to worry about the farm's potential closure, allowing Blue Creek to focus on development. Based on the interviews with the two living farm managers, all major developments at Blue Creek come through the corporate head in Salt Lake City. However, those changes are often instigated by the farm manager who not only follows orders, but considers how the industry is changing and makes recommendations as he sees fit. Cary Sanders mentions how there is a new technology he is interested in applying to the farm called variable seeding which works through the tractor's GPS to "recognize where you are and where you already seeded" so that it will turn off the planter when overlapping an area already planted.[222] According to Sanders, there is significant waste from seed overlap and he thinks the technology would pay for itself "in two and a half years" from what it would save the farm.[223] And looking further ahead, Sanders thinks the Church will eventually move to the remote controlled and self-steering

[222] Sanders, Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

tractors that are beginning to hit the market. Though he does not think it will happen by the time he retires, Sanders looks forward to the time when a farmer can set the "tractor to work all night" while he or she sleeps, "and the computer will run it and wake [the farmer] up if [it] needs fuel."[224]

Should this prediction prove true, it is easy to see how the farmer's sense of isolation from the farm would increase. These remote controlled and self-steering tractors would remove farmers from the land even more than before, though it would arguably connect them more socially as they would not be required to be in the tractor cab, away from population centers. But Sanders believes there will always be some need for a person to be present physically to fuel the tractor, fill the hopper with wheat seed, and perform maintenance; and that if you go "too far…it kind of takes the fun out of it," but still maintains that the majority of future farm work at Blue Creek will be computerized.[225]

The Garden's Sense of Impermanence

The future of the Garner Family Garden, on the other hand, looks much less mechanical, but also much less permanent. Though the Garners have invested in several machines like a small tractor with appropriate implements, trash pumps for watering, and mulchers to help with the composting, the size of the garden will never justify investment in expensive equipment. And considering the spiritually pedagogical purpose the garden serves, apart from the food it produces for the family, it is not likely the Garners would want to replace the human labor component with a machine. Doing so would defeat one of the fundamental purposes they see for having a garden: it being a place to learn hard

[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.

work, self-discipline, and sacrifice. While Garner family's agricultural pursuits may correspond more closely with the ideals of the Mormon agrarian tradition in terms of engaging individuals with the land and each other, its future is much less certain.

The Garners have lived and gardened on their one acre lot for over twenty-seven years. When they first moved to Bluffdale, it was a rural development. But twenty-seven years later it is part of the deteriorating rural landscape amidst the burgeoning suburban developments. Lots are now sold by fractions of an acre, with several apartment complexes and condominiums planned in Bluffdale's future real-estate plans. The pressures of urbanization have begun to press in on the Garner's family garden, with a major highway less than an eighth of a mile from their home and a new gas station planned just around the corner. In wake of these changes and in spite of the time and money the Garners have invested into their property, they are considering relocating to a more rural community.

Frustration with the growing constraint of the community on the Garner family garden is most clearly expressed by Richie Garner. With a family of his own, Richie lives just a couple of miles from his family home and garden on his quarter acre lot where he keeps his own garden. When asked how he saw the local community affecting his garden, Richie said, "the only thing here is that they're keeping me from doing what I'd like to do. I'd love to put my front lawn in garden too—it is south facing which would be the best place to plant—but my neighbors say, 'if you ever plant corn in your front lawn, we'll have problems.'"[226] Apparently, Home Owners Associations and city zoning laws

[226] Richard Garner, Ibid.

forbid certain agricultural activities, including the five chickens Richie keeps in his backyard.

Feeling held back by his neighbors seemed unique to Richie, as David and Christy had only positive things to say about their interaction with their neighbors regarding their garden. But the constraints of suburban living are very real for the Garner siblings, who are the only real guarantee for the perpetuation and development of the family's agrarian traditions and sense of place. Richie has a quarter acre lot, but the rest of the Garner siblings currently rent. And while their non-homeowner status may simply reflect a stage of life—finishing their educations and starting early in their careers—it reflects the increased difficulty in Utah for the maturing generation to own sizeable land while pursuing necessary employment in urban centers. Thus, the continued development of the Garner Family Garden's sense of place is uncertain. Moving to a new rural location is at least five years out for David and Christy, and Richie, who is more actively pursuing the family's agricultural traditions than the other siblings. But due to the local constraints, the Mormon Family Garden's sense of place as experienced in Bluffdale may soon be history.

Direction for Future Scholarship

As mentioned in the introduction, scholarship surrounding Mormon agricultural landscapes is underdeveloped, leaving room for new scholars and approaches. The cultural and environmental impact of international Mormon agricultural landscapes offers promising case studies for transnational scholars. The absence of scholarship on these places is in part due to their relative new existence, but also reflects the careful public relations the Church maintains with host governments and the restricted nature of farm

management information. However, careful researchers might have more success than they might expect studying these places, given the Church's recent moves towards institutional transparency.

Additionally, scholars might take an international approach studying the agricultural pursuits of Mormon lay members throughout the world. In 2011, the Church published its own article called "Seeds of Self-Reliance" in their monthly magazine detailing the efforts of members around the world to grow their own food.[227] Many of these stories came from Church sponsored programs that trained and provided gardening materials to members to begin their own gardens. Taking this article as a case study, transnational scholars could analyze how Western agricultural practices are exported by these Church programs and measure their cultural and ecological effects. Though these types of projects sponsored by the Church are waning somewhat in popularity and effectiveness—being replaced with more modern conceptions of self-reliance in terms of education, job training, and financial planning—it would inform these new programs and help them be more culturally sensitive and practically effective.

In addition to research into the Church's international agricultural landscapes, more qualitative research on U.S. based Mormon food-ways and folklore would prove fruitful as well as quantitative studies measuring economic self-sufficiency as it applies to urban gardeners. Though Christy suggests their garden "is not cost effective" and that there are too many things you cannot put an economic value to in terms of physical and spiritual health, it would be interesting to see the cost analysis of a family garden and

[227] Schulte, Ibid.

take into consideration things like medical bills and bank accounts that reflect the real economic effects of gardening.[228]

Potential for an Inspired Mormon Land Ethic

Considering the future direction of Mormon agricultural landscapes, it is important that professional farmers and hobby gardeners keep in mind the historical and doctrinal roots of their activities and let them inform their work. As demonstrated in chapters I and II, both the welfare farm and family garden are largely motivated by the Church's positions on social welfare and self-reliance, but it is my opinion that both farm and garden could do better in translating Mormon theology in their agricultural practices.

As discussed in chapter II, part of Mormonism's belief in a millennium entails a renewing of the earth, which will receive its paradisiacal glory and become heaven to all those who believe in and accept Jesus Christ as their savior. Given this concept of the earth as the Mormon's future heaven, it seems consistent that Mormons would approach their relationship to the earth with a long term—even eternal—perspective. Adopting an eternal perspective towards the land in their agricultural relationship would combat the tendency to worry about short-term profits at the expense of the land's long-term health and sustainability. Especially considering the Church's non-profit structure, where they are not dependent on selling their wheat to continue production but give it all away anyways, it seems the Church would have an advantage over for-profit farmers in terms of flexibility and resources to invest in sustainable practices. I recognize that both the farm and garden analyzed have made strides in working towards sustainable management, employing no-till methods at Blue Creek and an organic system in

[228] Christy Garner, Ibid.

Bluffdale, but both places could benefit from a heightened awareness regarding issues of agricultural sustainability that find justification and precedence in Mormon theology.

A doctrine-based Mormon land ethic is validated by a close reading of Jehovah's original and first commandment to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Most biblical scholars trace the first divine agricultural injunction to Adam and Eve's fall when they were commanded or rather condemned "to till the ground" and sweat amidst the briars and weeds in order to eat (Gen. 3:22). But God's first agricultural instruction arguably goes back to his first commandment to Adam and Eve in the Garden when He commanded them to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over…every living thing" (Gen 1:27-28). Typically, the commandment to "multiply, and replenish the earth" is considered only in terms of sexual reproduction of the human species, and for good reason.[229] The specific phrase, "multiply, and replenish" is used only five times in the Mormon canon of scripture, and in each case it refers to the genesis of a people: Adam and Eve, Noah after the flood,[230] and the early Church under Joseph Smith.[231] In each case the intent was for humans to "bear the souls of men" and "raise up seed unto [the Lord]" (D&C 132:63; Jacob 2:30, *The Book of Mormon*). According to one biblical scholar of the King James Version, the Old English rendering of *replenish* as translated from the original Hebrew means simply "to fill," which should not be misconstrued to imagine the earth needed to be repopulated, just continually

[229] Alonzo L. Gaskill, *The Truth About Eden: Understanding the Fall and Our Temple Experience,* (Springville: Cedar Fort, Inc. 2013), 50-51.

[230] See Genesis 1:28 and 9:1.

[231] See Abraham 4:28 and Moses 2:28, *The Pearl of Great Price* and D&C 132:63.

populated.[232] However, another meaning might reasonably be read into the command to *replenish* given its singular use in God's commandment to humans (Gen. 1:22, 28). According to another Old English definition of the verb, *replenish* also means to "restore (a stock or supply) to the former amount or condition." This definition suggests that God's command to humans to multiply and replenish the earth, contrary to popular cultural reading, means more than simply filling it with people. Indeed, it can also describe humankind's proper relationship to the earth and its resources—asking that where one multiplies or takes from the earth one should also replenish or restore to its former condition. God's agricultural instruction to replenish the earth entailed a relationship of give-and-take, making Adam and Eve gardeners and conservationists.[233]

An inspired land ethic in the Mormon tradition would not necessitate a strict adherence to environmentalist ideals of preservation, requiring the complete abstinence of certain landscapes for agricultural use. According to Genesis, humans are supposed to "subdue," "till," "dress," and "keep" the land (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:15). While s*ubdue* and *till* definitely entail a sense of oppression and even violence, they are paired with words like *dress* and *keep*, which suggest a care and thoughtfulness one might also show to a child or aging parent. What would define an inspired land ethic in the Mormon tradition then would be a sense of stewardship of the land as a gift from God and an eternal inheritance. Such a land ethic would recognize the natural restraints of its agriculture, farming and gardening in such a way that gives back as much as it takes, thus making room for

[232] Gaskill, Ibid., 135.

[233] For further evidence supporting an inspired land ethic unique to Mormonism, see Paul Walker, "Of Gardens and Prosperity: Toward an Inspired Land Ethic," *Worldviews* 18, (2014): 77-98

another working paradox of Mormon agricultural landscapes: the pairing of human productivity and environmental sustainability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal Background and History

1. What is your full name and year of birth?
2. Please tell me about your family? Please tell me a little about the town and community you are a part of?
3. What is your farming/gardening heritage/experience? How long have you and your family been involved in farming/gardening?
4. What do you know about the history of the farm/garden?
5. What is your earliest memory of farming/gardening?
6. What is/was your title and role on the LDS Blue Creek Welfare Farm? What is your role in the family garden and home economy?

Farm and Garden Methods

7. Describe the work cycle on the farm/garden. What is the scope of the work over a year? Does this differ from other local farms/gardens?
8. Please describe the knowledge needed by a farmer/gardener today. Please tell me about the skills of a farmer/gardener.
9. What do you grow on the farm/garden? What methods and equipment do you use?
10. What informs your farm/garden practices? How are management decisions made and who makes them? How independently does the farm/garden operate?
11. How big is the farm? How many people does it take to run the farm?
12. How are volunteers organized? Do volunteers have to have experience with farm work? What jobs do volunteers do?
13. Have there been any farm accidents with employees or volunteers?
14. What role does technology play in farm/garden work? What changes in technology have you seen or help implement on the farm/garden and how has it affected the work?
15. Describe water use on the farm/garden. What other natural issues do you have to work with in order to have a productive yield?
16. How are farming operations and processes passed down when a farm manager or employee retires?

Farm and Garden Motives

17. What is the goal or purpose of the farm? Does the non-profit status of the farm affect the way it is managed compared to a for-profit farm? If so, how?
18. As a non-profit organization of the LDS Church, do religious principles affect the work on the farm? If so, how?
19. How do the employees view their work on the farm? How do volunteers view their work on the farm? Is the volunteers' experience on the farm different than the employees'? If so, how is it different and why?
20. How does the farm/garden affect the local community? How does the local community affect the farm/garden? Can you remember any specific stories relating to this?
21. Has the farm ever been a source of contention in the local community?
22. What is the hardest aspect of farming/gardening? What is the best aspect of it?
23. What is the best experience you have had working on the farm/garden? What is the worst? Why do you farm/garden?
24. In your opinion, what is the most important aspect of farming/gardening today?
25. In your opinion, have your farming/gardening motives and methods changed over time? If so, how?
26. How has working on the farm/garden affected you personally?
27. Is there anything else you would like to share that will help tell the story of farming on LDS Church-owned welfare farms?

APPENDIX B

BLUE CREEK WELFARE CROPS INTERVIEWS

Cary Sanders Interview

(This interview took place April 11, 2017 on the Blue Creek farm. The interview was conducted in the cab of Cary Sanders' truck and at the main yard with Rod Montierth. Sanders is the farm manager and Montierth is the other full-time employee).

Ross Garner (RG): So, how many Church farms are there in the area?

Cary Sanders (CS): Right up here in this area there are actually two of us right now. There used to be three, but they combined two of them together after I left and came up here. So actually up in this area there's actually two.

RG: And are they both grain farms?

CS: No. They're both welfare farms but I'm mainly just grain. He grows alfalfa, grain, wheat, and he runs a lot of cattle. And that one's kind of located over in Fielding. But he runs cattle out here by us too.

RG: With a more diverse operation what does that take? Does it take more hands?

CS: Yeah, it does because he's irrigated, so they have pivots and all that.

RG: This is a dry farm, right?

CS: This is a dry farm. We don't have any irrigation whatsoever—just whatever Mother Nature gives us. So he runs less acres in cattle, but he has more guys than I have. There are two of us full time guys and then I have a part time, so there are kind of three of us. Then during the busy times—harvest and all that—we rely upon a lot of volunteer labor from the local stake and wards and they come out and help us.

RG: What does harvest look like? What time of year is harvest for the wheat?

CS: For wheat we'll probably start about mid-July, somewhere around mid-July, end of July through August, mid-August. We hope to keep it under thirty days. I'm trying to get it where we can get it done quicker, but thirty days is when we harvest.

RG: And it's volunteer labor, does it take much skill? Or do you just need a warm body to fill the space?

CS: We go through the wards and they can sign up, but you know, we put out kind of a description of this is what we're going to do and this is the skill-set we need.

RG: Do any of them know how to run the tractor?

CS: Yeah, you don't always get that. Mainly, they do a little bit of running the tractor, the grain cart, and then mainly driving the semis, hauling the wheat down to here [referencing the yard with large storage bins]. Then we teach them to run the auger and everything down here so they can unload themselves. But, you know, sometimes you get what you get—you get some good drivers and some bad drivers.

RG: And it's all just farm equipment, the Church doesn't have any kind of liability you have to sign a waiver for?

CS: No, when we have them come out here and volunteer, they have to sign a liability waiver. They sign in, there's a sign in sheet, and we give them the instructions so they know and are aware. But typically, if a volunteer is hurt out here their insurance will pick up what it picks up and then typically the Church's insurance will finish, but it goes through the ward they came out through, not through us here on the farm. We're self-insured, the Church is self-insured. And so it's the same insurance however you look at it, it just has to go through the different entities. But yeah, there is a sign-in sheet they have to sign and then we keep track of all the hours they put in. The Presiding Bishopric and the First Presidency, they like to see how many volunteer hours they get every year through all the entities of the Church.

RG: And that's just for personal use?

CS: Not just for personal use, but for tax purposes too, because it shows that we're a Church entity, that we're getting volunteer labor. I mean there's more than just seeing what we have, but it's mainly to see how many hours they get. And any operation of the Church that's run by Welfare, a cannery or any of these places or even the DI's that have volunteers, they all have to sign in and do the same thing.

RG: So harvest time is the main volunteer season, but where is the crop at right now? Is it planted and growing?

CS: We try to plant everything in the fall, so it's all planted. Now this year we did have some winter kill, so we've got to go in and thicken things up and replant some wheat this spring.

RG: And is it just hard red wheat?

CS: It's hard red is what we grow out here. The Church likes storing the hard winter wheat because it stores the best. They'll store some of that wheat up to ten years.

RG: They have storage units all throughout the nation?

CS: Yeah, they have storage areas throughout the United States and some up in Canada for wheat.

RG: Just to more easily dispense it in case of need?

CS: I believe so.

RG: So is there much volunteer work during planting season?

CS: We will typically get a few volunteers in to help do that, or if we need an extra help. In the spring we have some rocks to pick up or some clean-up projects, or whatever we try to bring in volunteers. This year, when we cleaned out the grain bins; we brought in some youth to help sweep out the grain bins and clean them up for us. They've actually used a lot of volunteers through the years out here for building stuff. The sheds up here and the house were built by volunteers.

I'm a paid employee of the Church. And then we actually have what they call an operating committee in the stake that this resides in and one member of the stake presidency is over that and then we have a couple others from the high council on the committee. So they're volunteers too and they just help out coordinate things whatever we got going on as far as volunteers or what else we need. And the fact is, those guys are set up to where, after we do expenditures and revenues and expenses, they have to go through and review all that before it's submitted to Salt Lake. So it's not just me over it, you got them reviewing things too.

RG: And the majority of this crop just goes to the bread making business of the Church for the Bishop storehouses?

CS: It depends on quality. They want top quality wheat, so if the wheat doesn't come in very good quality that year some of it will be sold on the open market. But for the most part, usually we'll ship it in. We'll store it here until January, February, or March usually, and then they'll clean out some grain bins either down in Kaysville where they have a holding facility or up in Burly, and then we'll start shipping ours into wherever they want it, depending on the quality of the wheat. And if it's good quality a lot of it will go to Kaysville for making the bread or flour, all that out of it.

RG: Pasta?

CS: Actually, they don't make pasta out of hard red. They make it out of durum. And there's a farm in Montana and Ririe, Idaho that actually grow a lot of the durum for them.

RG: So the Church, depending on the quality of the wheat, will buy from the open market and make their Bishop Storehouse products?

CS: Typically they grow enough off the farms they don't have to buy off the open market for wheat. But any other products they don't have they'll buy. The Church cans a lot of different things, but there's probably thirty percent of that the Church farms don't produce that they'll go out and buy on the open market.

RG: I was reading in the Deseret News article that covered this farm two or three years back that said this farm was considered the flagship farm of the Church?

CS: That was the manager over me; he kind of put it that way. It is actually, as far as the welfare farms, the biggest one they got.

RG: Acreage wise?

CS: Acreage wise and welfare farm. There's a distinction, because the Church owns a lot of other farms too, but they're not welfare.

RG: I seem to remember a video they produced on the farm down in Florida that's sort of cattle ranch, half potato farm, and half citrus.

[Pause in the recording as Cary takes a phone call]

CS: We ship it [the equipment] around depending on where the need is. But this is where we start right here [referring to Church farmed fields] and then our other yard is right up there, you can see the yard. A lot of it doesn't even look like we harvested but we did. We have a different header, we don't cut the straw down normally, we pull the kernels out of the top is all we do.

RG: And the header's that special machine that takes the top off?

CS: Yeah, and we leave all the residue as tall as we can so that we can collect moisture. That's the purpose. We're no till: we don't till, we don't plow, we don't disc. We don't do anything. All we do is some spraying in the summer to control the weeds and then that fall we have a big no-till drill and we just go in and plant with it.

RG: And then it just comes up through the chaff?

CS: Yeah, usually it will do pretty good. But yeah, there's a couple of neighbors around us, but we're going through on all the way to the hill, you can kind of see the green up there, you can kind of see our residue stubble up on that side hill that we cut last year too, and that cut of green up there. So, the central part is all just right here. The Idaho border is not very far from here and we do have probably six hundred acres in Idaho up on the border. Actually, we're only about four or five miles from the border.

RG: What is the total acreage of this farm?

CS: We're sitting right around ten thousand.

RG: And that's all in wheat? Is it all done in wheat every year?

CS: No, we do half-and-half rotation. So fifty percent gets planted every year and the other fifty we call fallow so we can build up moisture again for the next fall. It's a tuff area up here because you know we've had a lot of good moisture and rain, but by the time May hits, you usually don't see a lot of rainstorms any more. Like last year, we were done with moisture by the tenth of May and we didn't see rain again until like the seventeenth of September. So it's a dry area.

RG: So, you plant it in wheat because it can do well in dry circumstances?

CS: Pretty much, that's what grows the best up in here. There's a few, you know, they've grown some safflower in the past up here for weed control, spring wheats, but you know that's about all they grow up here typically. Well, up in the valley a little further there are some guys who grow alfalfa, dry land alfalfa, but they're flat up there, they don't have any rocks. We have a lot of rocks here.

RG: I know with some crops there are issues with monoculture year in and year out. Does wheat have issues as far as bugs?

CS: It depends on the year. Last year we had some fungus grow like a strip, because of the wet spring. It starts turning your leaves a yellow. So we had some of that last year, but as far as bugs we don't see a lot of bugs out here. It's actually pretty decent out here. Other areas you'll run into more issues than we do.

RG: And soil health is fine? Do you fertilize?

CS: Yeah, we put fertilizer down as we drill and then we'll put more on later with a ground rig or an air spreader whatever.

RG: So were you on a dry farm before you came here?

CS: No, I was irrigated.

RG: Was it much of a learning curve switching methods?

CS: Yeah, there's always a learning curve. I mean it's just how well you organize. I mean out here you only have a small window of opportunity to get things planted, sprayed, and harvested. Other than that, it is not too bad.

[Arriving at the main yard]

But this use to be the main yard. Like I said, those grain bins and that down there they never used to have, but they wanted something close because they don't plow up here in

the winter when we get a lot of snow. You don't come up here in the winter unless you ride a snowmobile.

RG: What does your job look like in the winter?

CS: Our job is we sit down in that shop or do whatever. Or you start hauling wheat out.

That's the header right there.

[Pause in the interview approximately eight minutes as we examine the farming implements]

RG: Is it a grain fertilizer or a liquid? [now examining a John Deer tractor with a seed and fertilizer hoper and the no-till drill]

CS: It's dry; it's a dry fertilizer.

RG: So a sixty foot spread, four hundred acres in a day. And are you the main operator? Is it all GPS navigated?

CS: Rod's the main operator. Me or him. We're the two main operators. It is GPS. It runs off GPS once you get it set up in there. That yellow dome up there on top is what pulls in the satellite signal.

RG: Now what exactly does the GPS do? Does it tell you when to turn or does it actually control it for you?

CS: It pretty much steers it for you. Once you set up an A B line, so you set an A point at this end and you drive it so far and then you set a B point and then it just keeps you straight.

RG: So you still have to set that straight line before it will take over?

CS: Yeah, you have to set the straight line and then when you start to get close to the end it will actually start beeping at you, because once you start turning and it knows where you turn it will start telling you, "You're ready to turn." With the set-up on this one it's as accurate to within about twelve inches, so instead of running sixty feet on your GPS you run it at fifty nine and that gets you close. And actually, in the cab, it will paint on your screen where you planted too. Out here, you can't see where you've planted typically, and so you're following on your screen in there where you plant so that if you miss something you can come back. And it will hold a straight line. They have a new computer deal that will keep our lines so where we'll just go in the next year and find the same line and actually go again. So if we keep the same lines we don't really have to set them every time.

RG: It's quite the engine. You'd have to be quite the mechanic.

CS: Yeah, that's not the biggest engine either. Yea, the new stuff, we mostly keep all the new stuff under warranty so we don't do anything typically but grease them and check the oil.

RG: So John Deere comes out and does the maintenance on them?

CS: Yea, cause typically it's a computer issue.

RG: Do you like that or hate it? It being out of your hands?

CS: You just get used to it. Yeah, it's just like new vehicles: it's all computerized. There is a size bigger than this tractor, this is the second biggest tractor they make. So the number 570 that's the number of horse power that is. We don't have a lot of equipment. If you go to an irrigated farm they've got a lot more equipment than what we have.

RG: What are those big brown tanks?

CS: Water tanks for our sprayer. They're for the liquid fertilizer, when we go to spray the weeds in the spring we'll actually run liquid fertilizer with us.

RG: Do you just spray Round-up or what do you guys use?

CS: No, not on the wheat crop. You know, 2-4-D, they have a lot of different chemicals depending on the crop.

That's our sprayer, that's what we use. The booms will fold out and you'll have one hundred feet and you can do about one hundred and twenty acres in about an hour. So in a day's time you should be able to cover just about eight hundred acres.

RG: And it's lifted to go up over the crop?

CS: Yeah, typically that's why it is. We're not as tall because we got a fatter tire. Other guys have skinnier ones that lift it up even more.

RG: Do you have tire tracks or do you just roll over the wheat?

CS: We just roll over the wheat. It leaves tracks, but if you do it at a short stage it will comes out of it, it doesn't affect it too much. And this is the combine.

RG: So that cuts down the stocks?

CS: Nope, we don't cut anything down. We hook that blue header on it and the grain goes up top. The head all folds out and it will hold about four hundred bushel up there when you're fully loaded. About two dumps off the combine on a semi-trailer fill it. This

is our small one; we got a couple of bigger semi-trailers in another shed. That's our grain cart, we run it out into the field to the combine with the tractor so they can dump on that and then we'll bring that on back to the semis and dump. So, those are pretty much our main pieces of equipment these three pieces. There's two other beds I can put on that truck. I've got a flat bed and one with a tank on it. Most of the trucks we got like the semis the big trucks they all come from the Church trucking: Deseret Transportation. Or we pick up a lot of D.I. trucks when they're done with them; they just move them to us if we need them. Same with our pick-ups, they actually come out of Salt Lake. They just tell us when to get rid of them and they give us another one.

RG: So how did you come to be a farm manager for the Church? What kind of degree do you have to have or is it just experience?

CS: They want at least a bachelor's degree. I have a bachelor's degree from Utah State.

RG: In agriculture science?

CS: In crop science, agronomy. I grew up on a farm in a ranch out of Idaho. But I knew I couldn't go back, so we just went to school and started looking for a job and you just end up with it. Now with the Welfare department, they have an extra question: if you want to work for the Welfare department of the Church or as a Church employee under what they call the presiding bishopric you have to have a temple recommend or a letter from your bishop saying you're temple worthy. Now if you work for some of the corporations that the Church owns, like what they call Ag. Reserves Incorporate that runs a lot of the other farms, they are equal opportunity, but we're not.

RG: So for the Welfare side you have to a member in good standing?

CS: Yeah.

RG: And as a Church welfare run property is it dedicated? With lots of Church owned properties they say a dedicatory prayer over it, do you know if Church farms are?

CS: This one has been around since the early sixties, late fifties—so they probably could have, but I don't know.

RG: And you make all the managerial decisions as far as what goes on here? Or do you get a lot of direction from Salt Lake?

CS: A little, but not much. I pretty much do it all as far as the budgeting and making the day to day operations and we have to do a budget and we turn that in and they say, "Well is this ok or not." I mean there are certain financial levels they deal where you have to go through them, and we do have technical managers that we have that help us with whatever we got to do. But for probably eighty percent of what we do out here we're on

our own as far as making the decisions and everything. We meet once a year and the bosses do come up a few times a year.

RG: Has this always been a grain farm? Do they ever change up the crop?

CS: No, it's always pretty much been a grain farm out here. I mean some of the other farms they've changed through the years a little bit depending on their demand for what they need. They have a couple vegetable farms in around Layton and West Point.

RG: So what informs your decisions? Are you always staying up to date on new techniques coming out of Utah State?

CS: Pretty much. We try and stay up to date on what's going on. I mean we might not implement them as quickly. I mean, with no-till we are about the first ones and only ones no-tilling right now. But no-till has been around for a lot of years in the states. But for here, we are the first and we've been doing it for about ten years. And we do have a neighbor and he just started last year, so it's starting to pick up a little more.

RG: And the theory behind no till is that it's less invasive to the ground, less erosion?

CS: Less erosion, plus your organic matter and your humus and all that is better, it builds up and you're actually helping your soil out a lot more by not tilling. But it takes a few years to get back.

RG: Is there an overarching philosophy on Church welfare farms that motivates employees and volunteers?

CS: The whole idea behind it all is it's for helping the poor and the needy. That's kind of the incentive. That's the goal, that's our goal: to raise food for the needy and the poor.

RG: And are the volunteers surprised at all when come out and see a modern farm?

CS: You know, most volunteers have been out here, but there are still quite a few who come out and they've never been out here this close and you know, it surprises them a little bit. You know, the header, how we do the wheat now, that's new. Oh yeah, they like seeing that and it's different than everybody else.

RG: I'm just curious, I grew up in an urban setting, my Dad works for ATK Thiokol and he's an engineer, we have a little family garden, but the concept of a modern farm is kind of foreign. People, especially urbanites, still just conjure up this image of a red barn, pigs, chickens, and cows.

CS: No, you look at what we do, we use the computer a whole lot now-a-days as far as researching stuff. You can pull data off the computer on this [machine] and put it on the computer at home, like your yields, chemicals you're putting down, and your planting

[information], and you input all that in there and it's storing it for each field. Then, at the end of the year you can pull it off your computer. So it's not like the old horse and buggy way back then. I'm not saying all farms are the same, now-a-days the bigger farms have newer technology because actually it saves you money. You try [planting] without auto-steer on a sixty foot wide spread and you start overlapping so far on a thousand acres. And so you go GPS and you could be saving yourself thousands of dollars right there because of that overlap. I figure on our drills, when we get done we have to go around our field twice to clean up the ends where we turn around and by the time we get done doing that we've put an extra five hundred acres on that machine. And then you take that five hundred acres and you add up how much fertilizer is still going down in your seed and you could be spending anywhere around from ten to twelve thousand extra dollars a year for cleaning up all that. Eventually, we'll go to another technology where we can go away from that and cut that down in half I think. It's called variable seeding so the GPS tracker will recognize where you are and where you already seeded and will shut off when you're going along there and then it will turn it back on instead of just drilling through and replanting. And that's where you waste a lot of it. The technology is there, we just haven't done it. And for what we save we could pay for the technology in two and a half years from our savings.

RG: So it's just a matter of getting permission from headquarters?

CS: Yeah, well its budgeting and saying, "We got to do this and budget for it and get the money to do it."

CS: [If you want to make money anymore] you have to go work for companies that support agriculture like fertilizer companies, seed companies, probably John Deere, I mean that's who's making the money, it's not the farmers. People come out and look at the farms and they're like, "You go new pick-ups, you got new [equipment] and all that." Well that's all fine and dandy, but you still have to have that equipment to do the job. But at the end of the year you might barely break even.

Rod Montierth (RM): There are a lot of variables, you know, you got the weather, and the prices, and the fuel.

CS: Other people control the prices of the commodities of agriculture, it's not the farmer. That's the biggest problem.

RG: Yeah, that can be frustrating. I mean, you guys grew up on farms and you were obviously on smaller acreage right, do you prefer that time or do you like the modern era of farming or is it all the same?

CS: I like the modern era, the GPS and all that, I like that stuff.

RM: I like that modern stuff too.

CS: If you want to come out here and combine without your GPS and control and steer that combine all day for thirty days straight, for twelve-fourteen hour days—good luck.

RM: It just about drives you crazy.

CS: At least with the combine you know you're not steering it. You're still controlling your header and all that, but got the straight line and it takes a lot of fatigue out of what you're doing.

RM: Especially if you're doing a quarter mile or a half mile around, you get these dog legs and you're constantly trying to overcompensate.

CS: Yeah, we got mile long runs here—it takes you fifteen minutes to twenty minutes to go from one end to the other. Some of them will put you to sleep if it's too straight because all you do is sit in the cab sometimes. But they are working on robotic controlled tractors and one day I think you're going to see it. You're going to see more automation in these tractors. Right now, where the GPS satellite is controlling it any ways and we have all of our borders marked in the computer, so once you get that and you get out in the field and you mark little spots that you don't want the tractor to go through and so it knows that, and eventually, I think you're going to see it more. I mean there are tractors out there right now that'll do it, not many, but I think over time and maybe not quite by the time I retire, maybe there'll be enough out there. But I think you'll end up where you can set this tractor to work all night long and go to bed and the computer will run it and wake you up if you need fuel. But someone still has to physically come out and fill up the wheat and the seed, fill up the tractor, but then letting it do its own you don't have to put a body in it. But I think one day it will happen.

RM: I do too. You know, technology will just keep on growing and progress you know.

CS: But you get too far and then it kind of takes the fun out of it too.

RM: You like the challenge right.

RG: I have an acquaintance down in Salt Lake area who runs his little farm with horses. He went back east and learned how to work with horses from the Amish and he came back started a farm here.

CS: Yeah, you know, not everyone wants the technology. The older generation, they just want to drive their tractor. But you know you got the younger generation coming in and taking over most of them and moving over to the automated GPS. Even when I started in for the Church probably going on fifteen years ago, you know, we didn't have GPS or anything down there and I'd been there three or four years before we got our first GPS

system on the tractor, and it was nice. It was more money back-then and the pricing on it has come down and it's a lot better than the first stuff out.

RG: Now when you say it takes the fatigue out of it, driving the tractor, is it mental fatigue, knowing where you drove and keeping track?

CS: Yeah, well before you had to keep it straight, fight the tractor, keep it straight, all day long—you get fatigued. You still get fatigued, but it's more sitting there. When I was on the other farm when I was planting corn the last few years I put a tablet in there and watch movies one night while I planted.

RG: What's kind of an average day during the harvest season?

CS: You know, I'll leave Brigham [City] at six in the morning I'll get out here by six thirty or quarter to seven and we get things ready to go so by eight o'clock we get things rolling. And then by eight thirty, nine we start shutting it down for the night. I don't like running on these hills at night. So you know, we'll run twelve thirteen hours on the machines, and that's just running the machines. By the time you get them running and ready in the morning and blow them off at night, you know you're still fifteen sixteen hours days. But for us harvest is only for about two and a half, three and a half weeks. So it's only for a certain amount of time. Planting will run that long too, trying to plant. But you know, typically planting, we're done in thirty days or less too. And spraying. Out of the full year we have about four real busy months scattered throughout out here on the dry farm. An irrigated farm is a whole other ball park.

RG: Hearkening back to the conversation of old timers and artisan farming, and the romantic notion of having a connection to the land—with ten thousand acres and having such a big wide spread, are there parts of the farm that are your favorite, or is it all just the same?

CS: Where ever the steep hills are I don't like the steep hills. There's no real favorite part of the farm. I'm a hired employee, so it's a little different and I still enjoy what I do and I still want to do a good job of what I do, but there's still a difference between owning your own farm and working for someone else on a farm. Those that own their own farm, I think there's a lot more pride in everything they do. And I'm not saying there's not here, I mean, where we work for the church, we do like to keep things looking good, you know, because people watch us and we do what we can to keep everything nice looking. But there is a distinction between owning it and working on it.

RG: And living on it, you know, having a little homestead on it right on the edge of your own fields.

CS: Yeah, because when I'm done and gone, you know when I retire I'm done there's no move on to whatever else.

RG: Do you have much of a garden at home, do your wife and kids keep it?

CS: No, I hate gardening, my wife and kids do, but I always tell them I have a big enough garden out here. You know and people ask you, "It's got to be great working out there in the great outdoors" And yeah, people get excited about getting out in the outdoors and I'm like, "I'm out in it all day, it's my office like your office is in an office building." And it is nice out here, because you don't see a lot of people out here and when we get busy we don't see each other a lot during the day—you're just off doing what you got to do. If you have problems you call to get help. But for me it's nice because I can go home at night and I'm away from it too. The last farm I was on I lived on the farm and I was never away from it.

RG: The Church had a home that you lived in on the farm?

CS: Most original Church farms all had homes on them. I mean, they put this home out here just for getting busy during the summer if you wanted to stay in it, but nobody has stayed in it for I don't know how many years. It's mainly mice and rats that live in there now. I mean, it looks good on the outside, but they let it go down. But it's not that far to go to Brigham, I can drive it in thirty minutes from the exit and then I do a lot of business through Tremonton and Corrine. During harvest it gets old though—commuting—because you're tired at night and you got to get home.

RG: Are you able to keep yourself busy during the day? In the tractor you can put in the tablet you can watch movies you can listen to music in that cab up there I can imagine.

CS: Oh yeah, we got radio, our combine has a refrigerator in it. The next tractor we get will probably have one in it too. Which is nice because when you're out there all day and you load it up with drinks and water and put your lunch in there.

RG: Your cabs are your offices.

CS: Pretty much. Our combine, we'll put an iPad in there and it will keep track of our yields throughout the field as we go. The technology is there where I can go on my phone now and log in and tell you exactly where and show you where my tractors are and my combine. And when we start harvesting you can watch the combine move. Yeah, I can go on and I can log into my display in my combine from my phone. As long as I'm operating it will come up in the combine and ask if they give permission and they say yes, I can see the same display on that combine in Brigham City as Rod can out here as he's driving it. And another good thing about their technology is if you have a problem and it breaks down it will send a code or an email and the John Deere dealership in town

is set up to where they can see those alerts and they say, “Oh, he’s got a problem.” They’ll get the emails and kind of diagnose a lot of problems in their before they ever come out here, which makes it nice because then they don’t have to drive all the way out here and say, “Oh, that’s the problem,” and then go all the way back. They can kind of tell where they’re at. I just noticed one of the John Deere dealers out in the Midwest they got a new app they’re putting in theirs that they can actually video conference in with the operator in the cab of the tractor now, which you can do, I think, with an iPhone with facetime. I don’t have an iPhone, but it’s the same concept. So you can show them pictures right there in real time saying, “Well this is what broke and this is or that.” And it’s the same with those driverless cars out there.

RG: Yeah, those google cars.

CS: Yeah, I wouldn’t trust one. I still like to control my driving. If I want someone to drive me I might as well fly there.

RG: I imagine that there’ll always be a part of farm work that’s menial, whether it’s getting rocks out of the field or just sitting in the tractor.

CS: Yeah, you’ll never get away from that. I don’t think so. I think there are still certain jobs you got to have someone there to watch what’s going on if something breaks down. You know. I’ve been back to a couple of John Deere factories where they build the equipment and a lot of what they do in there is a lot of robotics that do it all, but they still have guys that have to do touch up on any, on paint, you know, different things like that. Or torque down or just check, they still have things where they need guys to do quality checks and things like that.

RG: What kind of farm neighbors do you have? I saw a sign back there a Utah State Experiment station.

CS: Yeah, they have an experiment station right there that they’ve had out here for quite a few years. And most of all of them are just private farmers. They have farms out here and farms out elsewhere. Families still own land out here and they just lease it out to some of the bigger farmers. They’ve had it in the family for all these years and they just don’t want to so they just lease it out.

RG: And I imagine the local community is mostly LDS and have a good opinion of the farm.

CS: Yeah. Well Utah is only fifty to sixty percent LDS. But up in these areas there’s probably a bigger percentage that’s LDS, but you still have a lot of non-members. And that’s kind of our base, you know, we pull from those areas to help with volunteers. I mean, if you’re a non-member and you want to come out, we don’t have a problem with

it. You can come out and help too. I've been to places where they have non-members come out and help them.

RG: So if I want to potentially volunteer to help on the farm I talk to Craig Hawkes and when you call him or send him an email he'll notify me.

CS: Yeah, or he'll contact me and say, "There's a couple of guys that want to do something" and I tell him that I need a couple of volunteers. He'll organize them for us and bring them out. Typically we don't turn them away. We try and match them up with whatever they can do.

Craig Hawks Interview

(This interview took place April 12, 2017 in Howell, Utah outside of Craig Hawks' home. Hawks is the high council man assigned to the stake's farm committee and organizes the volunteer labor on the Blue Creek Farm. Hawks is also the mayor of Howell).

Ross Garner (RG): Craig Hawks is here. We're talking about Blue creek farm and just Howell in general, the city of Howell. So what's your calling in the stake or is it a ward calling?

Craig Hawks (CH): Well, it's in the stake. I'm the high councilor in the Garden stake and I live in the boundaries of Howell ward. So Garden takes the three outer wards in there. So, I live here in Howell and I'm the mayor of Howell. So it's not a big deal.

RG: Oh, well it's good to meet you.

We're right next to the cemetery here. How big is Howell?

CH: About 250 people.

RG: 250 people. And there's just one ward in Howell?

CH: One ward and the kids all go to town for school—there are no schools out here anymore.

RG: Gotcha. Is most of the community members of the Church?

CH: Yeah, the majority of them. There's just a few that's not, but the majority of them are.

RG: Are the majority of them farmers?

CH: No, no there's very few full time farmers out here there just. I actually worked for Thiokol and I retired there after thirty-five years. There's only a couple in the valley who are full-time farmers who haven't had a job somewhere else or still have a job somewhere else.

RG: What did you do at Thiokol?

CH: I was in transportation. I moved rocket motors and stuff down there.

RG: Yeah, my Dad works for Thiokol down in Magna.

CH: Yeah, in Bacchus. I go down there quite a lot hauling things.

RG: Yeah, he comes up here every once in a while for meetings and issues. As far as your position on the high council goes, you coordinate just with Blue Creek volunteer service hours or what is the relationship there?

CH: Yeah, kind of. I'm assigned to work with them guys. I work with Cary Sanders when he needs volunteers or he needs help. Anyway, I just kind of coordinate between them. We actually have a farm meeting to talk about it. We'll have somebody assigned to help them with equipment and somebody else is assigned to help with safety. That's Randy Mines for safety and Bob Dutry is assigned to help with equipment. And they have a farm out there too.

RG: Ok, so they are skilled people who are knowledgeable about the equipment.

CH: Yeah. So we have a meeting and we'll go over some safety things, and we'll go over some deals like if they're getting ready to plant and other things. We had some young men that went up about a month ago and helped clean the granaries out. They emptied all the granaries because they needed the bottoms of them cleaned out to get ready for next year. And they all went up and swept them—it took us almost about an hour and we had about seven or eight kids up there to do that.

RG: Are the youth pretty willing to go or is it kind of like, "Not the farm again"?

CH: Well, no. They're pretty good that way. If they've got time, they're pretty good to help us. They don't go there a lot. We have other services going on. We've got one ward in town that's talking about coming and helping clean some old fence line up here for service hours for their scout programs. The big one is when we start to harvest. They cut a lot of grain out there. They have a lot of acres and it gets going for about three straight weeks. We try to keep two drivers there full-time for them each day, six days a week. So we'll get volunteers from each ward and they'll fill that assignment. Sometimes they have two come all day, sometimes they'll have four. But, I think, last year, with all the volunteers' hours it was about 1500 hours.

RG: Wow. Just during the harvest or the whole year?

CH: Just the harvest. Just for that three weeks. It adds up when everybody's there all day.

RG: How many people usually get out there?

CH: Well, we only send drivers and we usually have two to four a day, so, you know, it depends how many hours a day and if they're broke down. But if they're running full time we got to have at least two good drivers.

RG: So that requires taking off work and arranging schedules?

CH: Yeah, they do. We send a list out. A lot of people who are kind of retired will do it. There are a few truck drivers who will take some time off. And where I don't work at Thiokol I can spend a little bit more time out there. You have to be able to drive a semi and they have some good facilities and everything. Works pretty good.

RG: Do they like you to have a CDL license?

CH: No, you don't have to because you're never on a highway. You're just in a field. But you have to know how to drive a synchronized transmission. So, some of them haven't done that. But we have some really good people come out.

RG: So the biggest group that goes out there was maybe that group of kids, like seven to eight?

CH: Yeah, a few years ago they had a stake young men's activity—young women and young men—up here where they planted all in the grass now. They used to farm wheat up here and, we got, oh we must have had ten tractors and about five or six big trucks and everybody just walked through those fields and loaded the loads up. I'm sure we loaded twenty loads of rock that day. We'd load them all off the field so they could farm it better and then we dumped them in the reservoir and different places.

RG: Was that for the Church farm?

CH: Yeah that was the Church farm. And since then, the Church farm up here put it all into grass and they raise cows on it. But the place on the other side they have a lot there and I think we'll do the same project there pretty quick. We'll get everybody together. We had a big turn out from the stake. I was surprised. There must've been probably close to close to sixty or seventy young men and some young women there and some leaders and they done a good job cleaning it all out.

RG: So picking up rocks. Was there generally a good attitude about that? Or were they like what are we doing this for?

CH: Well, they know what they're doing it for, but a lot of people who are raised on a farm know, you know? You've got rocks, so you walk along and throw them in the tractor and throw them in the truck. They had a really good attitude I'll have to admit. It's probably been four ago, I can't really remember. But yeah, they hauled a lot of rocks. And when the young men come out to volunteer, they do a great job; they really help us a lot. I'm sure there's a few that wish they weren't there.

RG: Is there some refreshment afterwards?

CH: Yeah, they did. I think, we started out with some donuts and some breakfast, then after we got done we met there and we had kind of a discussion about what we was doing and different things.

RG: Gotch ya. I'm curious to know if there is a ward or stake historian who covers these events or takes pictures, or is it not a big enough deal to get into the ward history?

CH: No, I hope we had some pictures from that night. I'd have to check with President Deacon. Maybe, if I think about it I'll ask him tonight. But, there's usually, at young people's events they usually take pictures. I thought about that last year, I was out there and did take a couple of pictures, but I didn't get a lot of pictures. I got thinking afterwards, I got one picture of that truck there, and the hoppers, they're dumping the harvesters into the hopper and then that's going into the truck and then that's a lot of grain. Then they can load that up in ten minutes about six, seven hundred bushel at a time.

RG: If there is a ward or stake historian, I would love to call them up to see if they have any documents. I'm curious as to what the experience is like for the youth.

Besides working for Thiokol I see you own a little bit of property. Do you keep cows, or sheep?

CH: Yeah, we run some cattle up here and I help them and my brother run some. We've just kind of done that. We keep busy.

RG: With most of the volunteers being non-farmers, are they usually all pretty competent or do they just kind of put them to the tasks that they can do the least damage?

CH: Yeah, but on the truck driving they've got to have a little bit of skill. Even some of the farmers, they've got to be able to drive a bit. You know, I mean, everybody, all of the farmers can all drive two tons. Some of them haven't been able to drive a semi. We've got a pup behind them that's pretty big size outfit. I think I've got a picture on my phone of one I think I can send it to you or something. I'll look, if I can find it I'll send it to you on your phone or something. Let's see I've got your number don't I. Can I just send it to that?

RG: Yeah. That would work.

CH: I can do that here in a moment. Well. What else would you like to know? Anything else?

RG: I'm wondering, did you grow up a farmer and then get a job at ATK?

CH: Yeah, I grew up at my Grandpa's. This is my grandpa's house I live in. And my dad, we lived down in the bottom of the valley, but farming was pretty tough for a while and

we moved into town and my dad went to work for construction, but I always came back and worked with my Grandpa. He and my dad run the farm for quite a while. My dad and my uncle had quite a bit, but they ended up losing a lot of their farm. And so I come out and I bought some more ground and I was just going to go to work for Thiokol for a couple until it paid for itself. And so I finally retired there. And so it was good. Yeah, I'm glad I had that job because agriculture is tough and it's been some good years, but it's gonna to be tough this year for all agriculture. The Church, they don't have to worry about making money cuz they take all their grain and donate it and give it to help people. And yeah, the price of grain has really dropped down low and the price of cattle and hay, that's the main things around this valley and, boy, it's really took a hit, this last year.

RG: What took the hit? Politics?

CH: Well, just supply and demand. It's kind of funny. It goes. All of a sudden there's too much wheat somewhere, we don't raise a lot of grain around here compared to back east but that influences the market, and there's so much grain around that the price went down. Cattle was really high three years ago and then everybody started slugging the market again so it all goes down. Hay was the same way. About three years ago, farming was really great, record prices and things, but it's turned around. Supply and demand has caught up so it's all back down. It just takes a while to catch up again.

It kind of hurts with areas and farms that can only really produce a select number of crops. You can't just diversify and put it in different crop in this area. And that's what it is here. You're limited to what you can raise out in some of these areas. I mean, we don't even raise corn out here much.

RG: Is most of this area just dry farming?

CH: Yeah, there's some at the bottom here that's irrigated, but the rest of this. But there's a CRP program, it's Conservation Reserve Program. So a lot of this ground has been put into that.

RG: Is that state or federal?

CH: It's a federal deal. And they stop erosion and stuff. Actually I think it was to help save farmers years ago. It's been going for about twenty years, so these guys they have to plant it all into grass and then they have to maintain it a little bit, sometimes they'll pasture it off or burn it off or work it off and then the government basically pays them to leave it in there and save the soil from erosion and stuff. It's been a long time. I thought it would only go maybe ten years, but I think some of them have been in there for twenty-five years. It has helped those people who do it because it's guaranteed income.

There's a picture. I'll send you that picture. That's a picture of our harvester dumping in this hopper goes around the fields. We don't drive the truck out there because the stubble is so tall, we don't dare drive our trucks in there. It will start a fire and burn it all up. So this big hopper goes around, they dump fill it and then dumps into the semi. Then the harvester comes around it'll dump in them and they'll go up into the other harvester. I'll send you that, it's a pretty neat picture.

RG: That would be great. So part of my project is looking at how the new modernizing technology has changed the perception of farming. I was talking with Cary, he's got his GPS tractor to help make driving and planting and harvesting more efficient.

CH: It does. You don't have near the waste any more. I know with a sprayer if it goes over-laps the nozzle will just shut off, so that's been good. They went to no till farming and everyone at first looked at it like, "That's not going to work." But it does. They don't even have to go over their ground except one time. They just take the sprayer and spray it. They spray it. That's a lot faster. You can go sixty feet at a time and then get over. And then in the fall, there's stubble there and they always have more moisture because the stubble keeps it there. And that's the biggest problem, it usually takes fourteen inches of rain to raise a crop of grain, so it takes about every other year you get a crop. Not too many people raise one every year around here unless it's irrigated. But, it's efficient. So they only have to pull that big equipment over there one time. And then of course their harvester and that goes fast. I was really impressed with the amount. I've seen a lot of grain around here and it was a good crop last year, but nobody had any better grain than the Church last year. Cary does a good job and they've figured out how to do that and do a good job. They fill them bins up. You'd never think they'd fill them bins up. They filled them all and had to haul eighteen to twenty thousand bushels just to get it all done, and now they've took it all and used it all and whatever.

RG: Does Howell community identify with the Church farm in any kind of a meaningful way?

CH: Well, I think a few of the farmers didn't like it. The Church doesn't just go out and try to buy ground from anybody. Out here, if the people want the ground, they'll go, if they want to sell the ground to the Church they'll go talk to the Church about it. They don't go out and try to buy it, but, I know there are a few people that say it's raised the price of grain or ground up a little higher and different things. But if you see the way things are going, I think people are starting to understand, you know, if they start looking at the big picture of where this all goes. Our committee just went down and we visited the mill down in Kaysville and then we went down to the Church welfare square down there and went through that. You start seeing all the good they do, it makes you understand a little better.

RG: Now was this something you did with the stake?

CH: Farm committee. The farm committee went down there. President Rose. He's actually the stake presidency over that, and then there's me and then there were five of us and we took our wives and went down. It was interesting to see all of that.

RG: It kind of helps with the bigger picture.

CH: Yeah it does. Cary set it up. I was glad to go see it. My wife was really impressed with the welfare square and the people they help and the things that go on. People don't know a lot of things that goes on down there you know. You've got one place where all the homeless come down all the time. The Church has got a different policy though. They'll give them things, but they've got to make them do a little work, like sweeping the driveway. It's funny they say the one's that really need help will come back and work every day and get a little food. The one's that's just looking for a handout, after one time they'll not come back. They were telling me about it.

RG: I used to work for the Church down at the Church History library. I did a project on Edward Hunter. He was the third presiding bishop of the Church. He was a cattleman and farmer back in Nauvoo and Pennsylvania before he came out here. He ran those affairs of the Church. I remember reading through his files and talking about the bums on the street in Salt Lake even in that time. Just making them work for it.

CH: Making them do something. And that's really good policy with the Church. You know, they're eager to help people. Well and it was funny down there how many people go there and work even at DI. They had to work there but while they're there they learn to they learn a skill. Teach them to go out and get jobs and interviews and then they learn that job they're doing. It's pretty I didn't realize they done that much down there but they do. It's like you know they teach you to work and then you take care of yourself. And some people just have some bad luck. You lose your job anymore and if you've got a family, you're homeless in a hurry. Without a great family behind you can really get in trouble. It's pretty crazy.

And you live out where?

RG: I currently live in Logan but I'm from Bluffale, [Utah] where the prison's is down there.

CH: Oh, OK.

RG: Well, they're relocating the prison now, but that's where it's at currently. I grew up working on a neighbor's ranch in Herriman, [Utah].

CH: Oh OK.

RG: They just ran some alfalfa and grass. Lots of cattle. But my project, I'm just doing a project on Mormon agriculture and the history of it. Kind of the two pronged approach of Church welfare with this industrial farm aspect but also this push for the family garden. "Grow as much food as you can" as President Kimball was really pushing back in the seventies.

CH: Well, and that's the way they've always told us. We raise a little garden out here. We get a lot of late frost and early frost. I've got a brother in law in town and he raises more by accident than I can. But we're learning to do it every little bit. I have to get some tomato plants, throw them in the house for a little while. Grow them as big as I can and then get them out there and cover them. It's a little shorter growing season out here so it makes a big difference.

RG: Do you guys can stuff, put stuff up?

CH: Yeah, my wife cans. She cans a lot of stuff, bottles a lot of stuff.

RG: And is it usually stuff you grow or do you have to go and buy stuff?

CH: Well, a lot of stuff she'll buy strawberries and jams. We pick up in Smithfield, [Utah] we have a little place up there and have a bunch of chokecherry bushes. Every year we'll go pick a bunch of them and then she'll bottle them. And grapes. There's a bunch of grapes down in Brigham by my daughter's place. We'll pick them and she'll bottle twenty-five or thirty big bottles of grape juice. The younger people don't do it much anymore but the older people, especially out here, they'll all can and put things away. But I think it's an art that's kind of going away a little bit. Hopefully it'll stay. One of these days we may need it for whatever we have. Food storage is important to us.

RG: My family has a pretty ambitious family garden. We've got a good size pantry that we keep full off with garden. We're in the same situation. All of our fruit trees seem to get frost bitten before they're mature enough. But we do enjoy putting things up and enjoying that throughout the year. My wife and I, we live in a little apartment in Logan. We've got a couple pots with herbs and vegetables, but we scavenge too. We find the people with extra grapes, or extra peaches or apricots or whatever and glean off their little orchards. It's fun. I've got one friend down in Salt Lake valley who farms for a living. But he does it kind of the old artisan farming with horses. He's kind of holding out, but he's just a couple years older than I am.

CH: He probably raises some specialty crops. There's a few farmers in Kaysville that raise mint and that's different things and that's been really productive for them. So those specialty crops sometimes will really help. They take a lot of work.

RG: He does grass-fed pork and cattle or beef and does milk as well. He has a small dairy that is kind of grass based.

CH: Oh does he? Yeah.

RG: He makes it work. Apparently he went out to New York and Pennsylvania and found an Amish community who adopted him for a year or two and he learned the trade there.

CH: Well they know how to do that without power equipment. They've learned to do it. It's quite an art, that's for sure.

RG: It's fun to watch him work. You have to buy into the nostalgia of farming a little bit, the romance of it to want to do that kind of stuff.

CH: I enjoy going back to Nauvoo and looking. I had a couple of guys that I knew really good, one of them was my scout master, he went back and helped run the team. He was a teamster. I say that's what I'm going to do when I retire, when I and my wife retire, I'm going to go to Nauvoo and run that for a year.

RG: Yeah there you go.

CH: I like horses and have worked a lot with them.

RG: Really? Do you own horses?

CH: Yeah, we have about four horses here that we ride and the grandkids ride.

RG: That's fun. Yeah. Technology, it does wonders as far as getting rid of the mind numbing labor and that stuff, but.

CH: Yeah, my son-in-law's got a swather in there. It cuts so fast and runs on GPS. I went into run it one day, but I say I don't know how to set it up. But he'll just make one round and he'll just set that GPS up and it'll just go itself. He'll just sit in there a read a book

RG: Or watch a movie?

CH: Yep. [Dogs barking] You're a pest Mag. She's my cow dog. She never did learn to retrieve until we was camping and they started throwing the ball to these other dogs and she started to get involved. She wouldn't ever bring it to you so we just started siting there and finally she'll drop it sometimes, but she'll come and drop it on your foot.

RG: Do you still work her with the cows?

CH: Yeah a little bit. Yeah, my boy takes care of most of them. I actually went on a medical from Thiokol. I have sugar diabetes and so I couldn't get a permit to drive anymore and then I got in a car wreck coming home one day. I'm just limited as to what I

do now. My boy kind of runs the farm and the ranch. He's working at Thiokol now so I help him.

RG: Yeah that seems to be the way to make it as a farmer. You've got to be willing to diversify your income.

CH: Yeah that's what everybody decided. I look back in this valley and there's only one person who's a full time farmer who is younger. Then the older people who are full-time farmers, they all grew up having jobs and kind of retired in ranching. But when Thiokol was going big there were about thirty people out here working for Thiokol. I think there's two or three now. They've really shut done. They quit building booster motors. But they're starting to go again now. They're starting to build some more. They may, they may go to the moon again or something they're talking about.

RG: Do they do testing out here at this plant?

CH: Yeah, you'll hear them out here every once in a while. That's what I did. I used to haul the segments over of the rocket motors. Take them places then they'd set them up and light them and burn them and watch them go. I don't know if you ever seen them when they do it. But I can tell when they do one. I'll see the smoke, see all the smoke then you'll hear the noise here after a while.

RG: My dad has brought home a couple videos of it. He used to work on the D5 operation.

CH: Oh yeah. That was good. Yeah, they made so many of them, we would ship it to them every week. Building two of them a week and we'd have to move them, we'd probably have to move them about forty times before they'd get completed So. Every day we'd be moving two or three before and then they had the C4, they redone all them again. A lot of motors they use for strategy, you know, The D5's are all on them submarines, you don't know where they're at. That's a good thing for our country to keep it safe, that's for sure. Hopefully we never have to use them, but the way the world's going you wonder. I'm afraid if they ever start using them then we're all going to be in trouble. I don't know if anybody'll survive that.

So who are you working for? Are you just going to school?

RG: Right now I'm just going to USU.

CH: So you're just doing this for like a thesis?

RG: Yeah, I'm writing a thesis on Mormon agriculture, welfare agriculture. Not so much the business side of it. Like I said, I'm doing the two pronged approach where I interview and study and research the industrial welfare, centralized with all the big welfare square

and all that. And then I'm researching the individual basis. I've got a couple projects this summer doing interviews with people in my hometown who kept family gardens because the prophet said so and just how self-reliant that makes them. So, that's the project. Once I get it all written up I'd be happy to share it with you.

CH: Well, I'll send you this one picture I have. I'll look through, I don't take too many others, I should've taken some of the kids cleaning the other day. I'll check with them tonight or tomorrow night. We have a meeting tomorrow night and I'll find out then. President Deacon was out here helping us work, so he's our stake president. He'll know. I'll bet there's a scrap book, if there is I'll figure out a way, I'll get ahold of you.

RG: I'd love to go out to the farm some day when they need a bunch of volunteers. Just to have the experience to document. So do you have an email list or how do you go about getting volunteers.

CH: Well, we just run it through the Church. Cary texts me and then we have a list. It usually goes to the high priests. The high priests group leader, they pass a list around and in elder's quorum.

RG: Well, I'd appreciate a text or email.

CH: There's one ward that called me about three weeks ago and they want to do a project and I told them, I says you tell me when you want to do it and I'll get ahold of Cary, and we'll have something for you to do. If they do that I'll give you a call. Well how long will you be working on this?

RG: Well, I'll be working on it for another year and a half or so. I just started.

CH: Oh Ok, so this fall you'll be around.

RG: Yes, and I'd love to come help with stuff.

CH: Well I can guarantee you we'll need some at harvest time.

RG: Sounds good, I will keep in touch then.

Greg Grant Interview

(This interview took place September 25th, 2017 in the shop on the Blue Creek farm near the grain storage bins off of I-84. Greg Grant is a part-time employee. Grant was sick on the day of the interview and had been for a week previous to the interview, partially explaining his short responses).

Ross Garner (RG): This is Ross Garner with Greg Grant on the Blue Creek Utah Crops Welfare Farm, owned and operated by the LDS Church. Today is September 25th, 2017 and we're meeting in the shop near the grain bins near I-84 Interstate. Greg, could you start by stating your full name and birth year.

Greg Grant (GG): Greg Gordon Grant, and my birthdate is 6/8/62.

RG: Great. Could you tell me a little bit about your professional background and how you came to work here at Blue Creek?

GG: Well, It all started back years ago with Clair asking me to help him out a little bit on the part time scale and it just slowly worked into a full-time job.

RG: What was your history with farming before you met Clair?

GG: Yeah, I've been a farmer my whole life down there in Howell. My family had a big farm.

RG: What kind of crops did you raise on your family farm?

GG: It was wheat.

RG: Just wheat?

GG: Yeah. We had grain and once in a while a little safflower.

RG: What is your position here? What kind of work do you do here? Do you have a title?

GG: What's that now?

RG: Do you have a title here? What's your position here? What are you referred to as?

GG: Well, I guess I'd be called an equipment operator, running them dozers and graders. I think that's what they call it—equipment operator.

RG: So what does that entail? Driving dozers you said and doing some grading of the land?

GG: Yeah, grading roads, dozing, making terraces, knocking some down and whatever comes with that territory.

RG: Can you describe a terrace? What is a terrace and what is the point of it?

GG: Making terraces are made to hold back water. Now-a-days with the big equipment we got, we are dozing down these terraces so we can roll over them a little easier when we got too much. Yep, tearing them down, so they can farm over them a little easier.

RG: Terraces are usually part of a steep incline area?

GG: Yeah, tearing them down a little bit so we can roll over them a little easier with other equipment. We've got such wide equipment now-a-days we don't need as much, so we knock over those terraces down to roll over them easier.

RG: So when you started working for Blue Creek did you have to learn their equipment or were you using equipment you were familiar with already?

GG: Yeah. I've run grader and dozers for the town, Howell. So it's something I've been doing for a while.

RG: So you worked for Howell City for a while?

GG: Yeah, since about the mid-eighties I've been a part of the city council since about the mid-eighties. Yep.

RG: What's the relationship between Howell and Blue Creek farm? How interconnected are they, the people who live in Howell and work on the farm? Are there other people from Howell who work at Blue Creek or have worked at Blue Creek?

GG: No. I'm lost a little bit. I'm sick.

RG: Yeah. We can do this a different day. I'm sorry.

GG: All the people from Howell, they've got their own things.

RG: How do you identify the different parts of the farm? Do you have different names for the different fields and sections? You know, there's ten thousand acres, do you have them named different areas?

GG: Yeah, our farm would be called the Grant farm, and some is called the Simons farm. We just still call it by who owned it so we can identify where it's at. Yeah, like on up there, there's the Highers and all these other places like the Stokes'. Yeah, we call it what it is there.

RG: Whoever owned the property last or still owns it, that's what you call it by is their last name?

GG: Yeah.

RG: What would you say is the hardest part about your job or the least pleasant? What part of the job do you hate or isn't fun?

GG: I don't consider it that hard. It isn't that hard.

RG: So what is your favorite part about working on the farm?

GG: Oh, just everything. I like working outdoors. Just the farm and being self-directed. You know, I like farming.

RG: For a modern farmer, what kind of skills and knowledge is required to do your job? Is there anything specific to a farmer?

GG: No, not really.

RG: OK. As a Church welfare farm, do you see religious principles motivating the work on the farm or is just another farm in how it operates?

GG: Well, there can be some religious times in it I guess. I don't know, I guess sometimes you can look at it just as a farm, I sometimes look at it as a religious farm, which it can be I guess.

RG: Are there some things that you worry about or don't have to worry about working for the Blue Creek Welfare Farm that other family farms in the area have to consider and work through?

GG: Well, maybe. I don't look at it as a religious farm, but maybe I should since it's a Church farm.

RG: Making decisions on the farm, do you and Cary and the other employee collaborate and talk about it? How do you make a decision?

GG: Yeah, we have a decision or two to make once in a while, which we do talk about it.

RG: When the Church went to no-till methods here, did you and Clair make that decision together?

GG: No that kind of came from downtown. They wanted us to go to no-till.

RG: When you say downtown, you mean Salt Lake Headquarters?

GG: Yeah, they're the ones that came saying, "We want you to go to no-till." So we did.

RG: Do you know why they wanted to go to no-till?

GG: Well I guess it was mostly to see if it was going to work and if it didn't work they always had the money to go back to the way it was. You know, not everybody can farm like that, to have the money to farm like that.

RG: So the equipment to do no-till is more expensive than traditional equipment?

GG: Yeah.

RG: Do you just have one boss in Salt Lake who kind of says, "Let's do it this way?"

GG: Oh, I don't know about that. I imagine there are several. They don't include me on that decision making.

RG: I know your son sometimes works out here with the Church. How long has he been involved in the farm work out here?

GG: Well, he started when he was in high school.

RG: What would he do out here?

GG: Just whatever.

RG: What was his name again?

GG: Clint.

RG: When they have volunteers come out and help in the harvesting time do you interact with the volunteers at all? Do you train them on how to do their job?

GG: Yeah, they pretty well know what to do. Sometimes we have to tell them to do this or that, but most volunteers know what farming is and truck driving and what not.

RG: Does the farm here have any connection with Utah State, the extension service? Do they ever have soil testing or other things?

GG: Yeah. I don't know if we have as much to do with it up there as we used to. Clair used to plow and drill some of their lots there.

RG: Gotch ya. Could you describe some of the process in the farm like from spring to spring? What does a harvest period look like?

GG: It always varies. It can always vary and change.

RG: What are some of the natural weather issues that make farm work variable?

GG: Well, since it's dry land when it rains we like it and when it doesn't rain we don't get the crop.

RG: Have you ever had too much rain?

GG: There's been times we kind of wished for it to slow up and stop, but not very often. Usually we'll take it.

RG: Do you have any specific memories of a particularly good year or particularly bad year? And what made it good or bad?

GG: Well, you roll with the times. Every year's a little different. We always want the best we can out of it, but sometimes it's just the way it is--Mother Nature.

RG: When you first started working here what buildings existed on the farm? Was this shop here?

GG: No. It was just up to the Blue Creek farm shed.

RG: So just the yard up north?

GG: Yeah.

RG: So did you help build this or did they have someone come in and build this?

GG: Yeah, they had it built.

RG: Did Clair ever live on the farm up in that house on the main yard?

GG: Yeah, once in a while. Usually not. He'd usually just go home.

RG: Is he from Logan?

GG: No, he lives in Tremonton. So it wasn't too bad for him to go home.

RG: In your opinion, what would you say the most important part of farming is today?

GG: The most important part of farm?

RG: Yeah, in order to farm well what do you have to do?

GG: I don't know. I guess getting the crop in and harvesting it.

RG: What's the hardest part about harvesting?

GG: Putting up with the heat. It seems like I can't handle the heat as I used to. So in my opinion it would be just that.

RG: Is there anything else you would like to share about the farm here and what you do here and how you feel about it?

GG: Well, no. To me it's just a job.

RG: Are you full-time year round? or part-time?

GG: Yeah, I'm a full-time part-timer I guess you could say.

RG: Alright. Well thank you Greg. Again this has been Ross Garner with Greg Grant at the Blue Creek welfare farm in Blue Creek Utah.

Clair Zollinger Interview

(This interview took place October 11th, 2017 in Clair Zollinger's home in Tremonton, Utah. Zollinger was a former farm manager of the Blue Creek farm and continues to farm on his own property. Many photographs, maps, and other records included in this thesis came from Zollinger's personal records).

Ross Garner (RG): This is Ross Garner with Clair Zollinger at his home in Tremonton, Utah. The date is October 11, 2017. Clair, just for the record, could you state your full name?

Clair Zollinger (CZ): Henry Clair Zollinger

RG: And just the year of your birth.

CZ: The year 1940.

RG: For a little background information could you tell me a little bit about your immediate family.

CZ: My wife's name is Tamera. We were married in 1963 on September the 27th. I went into farming with my dad and brothers. We formed a family corporation and later we dissolved from that and each went our separate ways. In 1981 I became the welfare farm manager for Blue Creek Utah Crops. We have eleven children, eight boys and three girls. And they're scattered everywhere from Seattle [Washington] to Moab, Utah. And we have nine grandchildren.

RG: Are any of your kids still farming?

CZ: No, but three of them are in landscape architecture.

RG: Close enough. Haha. When you started at Blue Creek, was it just a wheat crop farm?

CZ: Yeah, when I started, you may want to stop here. [Pause while Clair finds a short history of the farm that he authored]

Ready?

RG: Yeah, so if you could tell us a little bit about the history that would be great.

CZ: The farm is located in Pocatello Valley roughly twenty-five miles north-west of Tremonton. The farm is managed by myself, who is a paid employee of the Church Welfare system.

In the late 1940's President Potter, who was then the President of the Bear River Stake, purchased what was known as the Big Field dry farm from Wilks Nelson. At that time the

farm was 2400 acres. The Bear River Stake was put in charge of the farm and its operation. In the mid 1980's the Church purchased an additional 1750 acres of dry farm from Knud Fridal, which joins the farm at the homestead and goes on a north-eastern direction. This land bordered the existing farm on the north and on the east. About this same time the estate of E.A. Miller family donated 850 acres of dry farm to the Church, which is on the west of the farm and buildings and grain silos. This land bordered the existing farm on the north. This brings the total acreage of the farm to over 5000 acres with approximately 4900 tillable acres.

The farm has been under the stewardship of the Bear River Stake, followed by the South Bear River Stake, the Tremonton Stake, the Garland Stake, the Fielding Stake, and is now back in the Garland Stake.

In the book titled Pure Religion by Glen Rudd there is a picture taken at the Blue Creek farm in the early 1950's. This picture shows President J. Reuben Clark, Harold B. Lee, Henry D. Moyle, and Bishop Wirthlin, and Elder Marion G. Romney. The combine [in the picture] is different from the one purchased on the farm last year, which is the newest John Deere combine you can buy today.

And then there's the production side of that Cary has given, but I could add a little bit before him.

RG: Yeah, if you could speak about the purpose of the farm.

CZ: The farm exists because of its ability to grow high quality red winter wheat for the welfare system of the Church. The wheat from this farm is used in many of the cereal and bread products in the Bishop Storehouses. It is also used for humanitarian purposes worldwide when needs arise. Each year about half of the farms tillable acreage is planted in wheat and the rest of the land is rested or fallowed. Each year the farm is given a production assignment to meet the needs of the bishop's storehouses. The 2006 production assignment for the farm is 45,000 bushels of hard red winter wheat. Each year a production assignment is given and the assignment is almost always reached and most years it is exceeded.

How much of the tillage [do you want me to go into?] Cary probably went into all that.

RG: Yeah, do you have this in an electronic form? [referring to the written account Clair Zollinger was reading from].

CZ: No, you can take this though and return it.

RG: Yeah, it would be easier for me just to type this up.

CZ: Yeah, there is some valuable stuff, and the map.

RG: Yes, the map is great.

CZ: You can take this.

RG: If I can photo copy it I'll return it back to you.

CZ: This is the original farm, the 2400 acres [referring to the map in his personal history of the farm]. And the Knud property, that was stated earlier, is right here and there is 1700 and some acres here. And this little strip right in here that isn't listed, is the E.A. Miller and it goes up here. That isn't in here, but that isn't going to be that difficult.

So that ends that purchases that goes in here. Since then they have bought the Bill Bishop farm right here and right here, and they bought (that isn't even in here either) a farm right in here. I'll get another map that can show you, the Abbot farm. These two farms were purchased about the same time in 2008-2009 right in there. Then they bought property right over here in Howell. Did you go to that property?

RG: I didn't, but I talked to Craig Hawks and he pointed it out to me.

CZ: Yeah. So there are two farms they bought there. Greg's mother and father's farm. His grandfather purchased it and ran it. They bought that farm and that's now turned over to another welfare project to run cattle. But then they bought the Manning farm, which is about 1200 acres and that is attached to this farm here. And then they just purchased the Deloris Stokes farm here with 3000 acres and over here. So they're up to about 13000 acres I think right now. So that will kind of give you an idea about that.

RG: When you started managing what was the acreage?

CZ: When I started managing it was this only, [referring to the original 2400 acres] and about this come and the Miller farm come and we also rent some property in here but that's not needed for this here. We rent another about 1000 acres right in here.

RG: When the Church purchases these new farms do they approach the seller or does the seller usually approach the Church?

CZ: It can go both ways, but mainly it's the person that owns the farm has decided that he and his wife and family are going to sell. And they think about who they're going to sell to and most every time they have chosen the Church to purchase the property and that's the way it goes. This one wasn't that way. They bought that right from Knud. This one the family came to the Church. Bill Bishop came to the Church. Abbots came to the Church. Greg's family came to the Church. Simon's family came to the Church. So there's only one that the individual didn't come to the Church.

RG: And is the purchasing decision made by Salt Lake?

CZ: The decision once it has gone from the owner to the Church, the Church has a real estate department that covers the world. And so they take it from there. And they search the price, a fair and equitable price, and all the other things that go with it. And every property that is purchased requires a survey so that they know the actual boundary. And we got into problems with some of these places because it had never been settled by the owner and the neighbor.

RG: Where the boundaries were?

CZ: [Nods] And it caused a lot of deep feelings

RG: Against the Church or against the neighbor?

CZ: Both. [Response removed at request of Clair Zollinger]

RG: So, most of these are just family farmers?

CZ: No these are big, big farmers out there. And this one here, o' boy, this one here probably divided the family and they may not come back together because of how it was worked out [referring to the Deloris Stokes property on the map].

RG: In selling to the Church? Part of the family didn't want to?

CZ: Well when this person died, Deloris Stokes died, his son rented it and had somewhat of a promise that he would then be able to purchase it. So when the family got ready to sell it they'd already approached the Church and said to their brother, “Yes, you can buy it if you can match this price.” And he apparently had talked to the Church, and he said, “I'll give you this much money per acre.” Well, in the meantime the family wanted more than that and the Church paid more and so that brother who had rented it for a number of years really got ticked off, and that's when a lot of those farmers out there put their signature on the paper and a ringleader out there was doing it all. He campaigned to these people to sign and sent it down to the general office of the Church.

RG: Were all these people living in Blue Creek?

CZ: They live all over, but mainly in the county. And this isn’t just a place where maybe it just happens here, the adversary has a way of needling people and causing problems.

RG: Is the Church currently the biggest land owner in the area?

CZ: Yes, this farm is the largest Church farm in the entire welfare system. Now the Church farms are divided—here's a picture: welfare over here and commercial over here. Welfare is tax-exempt. Commercial, their farms pay taxes and everything that a normal land owner would pay. For instance the Deseret Land and Livestock, the Florida farms, and things like that—they're all commercial. The Church owns vast holdings in Mexico

and Australia, and England, and in South America, they own huge places. They own a peanut farm in Texas that produces all the peanuts for the peanut butter for welfare. So their holdings are all over. They have a certain amount of their monies in real estate.

RG: Have you gone to any of those other welfare or commercial farms to see how they operate?

CZ: We have, yeah, we've gone to them. But there's two different sets of principles on each one that they follow. With welfare, this book Pure Religion, and if you want to Ross you can take that too and thumb through it.

RG: Actually, I've got it right here from the library.

CZ: That's a wonderful book. Glen Rudd. I think he was ninety-five or ninety-four. He's the one who wrote that book. He came out and rode with me on the combine. It was the thrill of his life because he's the one who put this picture in this book [referring to the picture of Church leaders on a combine at Blue Creek]. Yeah, it's right here. You may want to mark your page.

RG: Yeah, that's a great picture.

CZ: Yeah, I don't think there's another picture in all the pictures that have been taken where there have been five general authorities in one picture [on a welfare farm].

RG: On a combine

CZ: Especially on a combine. One can't visualize how much that picture is important to the welfare program itself, because all of these brethren were instrumental. Every one of them: J. Reuben Clark, Harold B. Lee. Marion G. Romney.

RG: Maybe, you could speak to that. What are your thoughts on the Church's self-reliance policy and how does Blue Creek fit into that notion of self-reliance.

CZ: Ok, so you're going to have to define self-reliance for me, because self-reliance is for us and it also is in welfare. But it's a service that we render in our canneries and other things. I know my brothers in Kaysville, they go often to the Kaysville elevator (you see it along the freeway) to clean it and make sure everything is cleaned and nice.

You can take this, along with what I'm going to give you in this. Seventy-five years helping the poor.

RG: This was in the Church news? Yeah. I could probably find this on the internet. I'll just make a note.

CZ: And this book, I'm not sure if it's going to be in there, but I'm going to look right now. No it doesn't have anything on self-reliance. But, what did you mean by that?

RG: So, a major part of the welfare program of the Church is to help people become self-reliant.

CZ: Right, ok, let's stop there. Say something happens to you. Whose responsibility is it first?

RG: My responsibility

CZ: Yourself, and your family. Ok that's one. Yeah, so it's you first, then your family second. Then who's third?

RG: Maybe my neighbors and the Church?

CZ: Exactly, they don't step in until then. But it happens so often though where people avoid the family and go right to the Church.

RG: So for Blue Creek as a welfare farm, I feel like the Church tries to set an example of self-reliance. So they have these farms, they have these canneries, they have the mills, they have everything to be self-reliant as an institution so they don't have to take their grain to somebody else's mill and have it milled there. They have their own mill.

CZ: Let's stop there. This only happens in Canada and the U.S. If you're in New Zealand, where I was on my mission, they don't operate like this at all. It's all through money—that's tithing and fast offerings. But in Canada and the U.S. that's exactly what you're talking about: the farms and canneries and storage. The Church has a wheat storage that will last three years.

RG: For all its members?

CZ: No. And you may want to write this down. It's a strategic storage and the first wheat that goes in goes through a three year period and then it goes out if it's not used. That three year storage is for the poor and the needy and the widow. Not for you and me. We are supposed to be capable of storing our own.

RG: Gotch ya. I'm curious about volunteers on the farm and employees. When you started managing was it just you and Greg or did you find Greg later on?

CZ: Yeah, I found Greg later on. At that time they let a farm manager's sons help. And I have eight sons and every one of them have been out there working and they've been paid, they've been paid a smaller salary, but they were paid. But while they were working we had volunteers come out to help at times especially at the harvest time to drive trucks and things to empty the wheat to the elevators and things like that. Now Ross, volunteer

labor is perhaps the most critical part other than the items needed to take care of the poor and the needy. That's so integral in the full concept of welfare. The Church has an accurate accounting form for volunteer labor. I had to fill out the name of the person, the stake they were in, the number of hours they worked on the piece of paper, and then that was gathered for the month and then I'd send it in at the end of the month. So those figures are well documented and they have to be because the IRS eyeglasses the Church constantly, so they not only have to be accurate, but have all the files and things that they need. So, in your question there, volunteer labor is a highlight of most welfare farms. There's a welfare raisin farm in California that for getting the grape ready, the cluster grape ready for raisin they have to clip it and lay it on white sheets on the ground a paper. They get ten thousand people a day.

RG: Incredible.

CZ: And there's a video on that farm. It brings tears to your eyes because they have a little side in there of a Spanish couple with their children coming on Christmas Day to do the work and they were asked by the farm manager, "Couldn't you come during the week?" "No we couldn't. We barely make it because we have to work for employment." Yeah, it's phenomenal what that service and that rendering of yourself in that charitable work process like that.

RG: Is there a similar attitude for the volunteers you get at Blue Creek.

CZ: Yeah, I'm going to show you something right now. In fact, let's go through these pictures while we're on this so we won't have to do it later on. This here is an old picture of the farm sign out there. It's still there but there, well actually no, it's taken down, there's a new sign there. This here is the home long before we put in the trees. I put in along with volunteer labor put in all those trees, rows of trees and things. Yeah.

RG: When was the house built?

CZ: The house was built about 1991 somewhere in there.

RG: And that was for you to stay at during the busy season?

CZ: Right, and there were times you know we don't get off the tractor till one or two in the morning and rather than drive home we have a nice place to come and stay. And that really worked out wonderful. Here's another picture of the farm back then. It was strip farming, the fallow and the wheat, the fallow and the wheat. It's now changed to great big fields with our no-till. We don't have to do this because our no-till took care of our erosion. This strip farming helped take care of the erosion because when the water came it might run, but it would run into the stubble, which would hold it and it wouldn't get back to the next fallow field. So this is the way it was farmed originally. This is some of

the tractors that we had. Now this here is the beginning of the trees and the tree belt we planted them rows twenty feet apart.

RG: And what was the purpose of the trees?

CZ: An aesthetic look to the farm and a place where birds could come. There are deer in there and things like that. And then just to see if we could do it. Cause there's not much vegetation out there as you know. Anyway, here are volunteers. And on that, for five years, we had volunteer people come out and water. We had a five hundred gallon tank with a little tractor on it and they just went from tree to tree. There are over one thousand trees and bushes planted in that spot.

RG: And that was around the time the house was built as well?

CZ: No, the house was built before that. And, this is how they did it years ago: Mules.

RG: Twelve mule team.

CZ: Yeah, this is how they did it.

RG: You never farmed with horse power did you?

CZ: Well, I did with my dad when I was young. This is pulling a wagon.

RG: These are all Blue Creek images?

CZ: Yes, these are Blue Creek. And these are mules again on the back side pulling harrows to help smooth the soil. And this is the little farmstead they had. Now this is the property right here. This is the Knud Fridal property and that site is right down in here.

RG: Are all the sections of the farm still referred to by the names of the original owners?

CZ: No. You know in a few more years they will all kind of be forgotten. Because I was thirty-two years out there and because I was out there when all these places were not owned by the Church, I was just operating this here as the welfare manager, and here come this and here come this, and so I'd say to my hired farm hand, "Go out to the Knud Fridal place and such and such." So yeah, we referred to it then, but now instead of having these separate things there's huge large fields and one field is almost one thousand acres.

RG: When did you hire on Greg?

CZ: Let's see. Greg came when this farm… no, no, Greg came after that. He came about, when did I say the trees were planted? 1990? Maybe 1989 or 1988. He's been there a long time and I hired his son also.

RG: Clint?

CZ: Yeah, Clint's not working there, only on times when they really need him.

RG: What was the most employees on the farm? To me it's pretty remarkable that two full time employees and one part time can manage 13000 acres. Was it always that way, requiring about two or three employees?

CZ: No, when we went to no-till in 2005 everything began to be de-labored. For instance, Cary's sprayer out there, in one day can spray 800 to 1000 acres if he has the product and everything right there. Now the sixty foot no-till drill, when I was there and we were running it, we ran it twenty-four hours: one man would take it twelve hours and the other man would take it through the night twelve hours. And you can plant probably three hundred acres in that twelve hours. So you can plant six hundred in twenty-four hours. And six into twelve thousand that would be six days [math was wrong, it would take twenty days to plant 12000 acres at a rate of 600 acres every twenty-four hours].

RG: Was the decision to go to a no-till operation made by you or was that again Salt Lake making the decision?

CZ: Alright, the Church welfare farm manager is overseen by another person above him and there's two men that oversee all the welfare farms in the Church. Two.

RG: Just two?

CZ: And they work out of Salt Lake. And they're divided. One takes so many of the farms and the other takes the other half. So prior to us going to no-till in 2005 I, myself, had been looking into no-till. But realizing it's not going to happen until the brethren decided "let's go." So they decided. So we met in Great Falls—well, Fort Benton…actually Geraldine, it is south of Fort Benton—on an extended trip up there. Me and there's two other dry farms that are large, so there are three farm managers and those two and there was a presentation give up there because Great Falls had been a leader in no-till for a number of years. And so there were a couple of fellows there that took over and told us about it. And then a large question and answer period after. And we went through that in one day. And at the end of the day everyone left, but our two people above us and the three of us, and they put it to us, "We're going to go with this no-till." And from that day on, that's the way it's been.

RG: And besides the de-laboring of the operation, has it had other effects as far as less spraying?

CZ: Yeah, the de-laboring is really, really important. But as it is so important, there is one that is equal and that is soil erosion and tilth. Tilth is a word used for the best soil that you could possibly have, whether it's in your garden or in the farm. And tilth only comes

through organic matter putting back into the soil. And when we went into no-till there were farmers around us saying, "OK, the Church has gone off the deep end. If they think they can try this no-till and have it successful in northern Box Elder County, they're going to lose the farm they're going to lose it all." Last year, the person who was most vocal in that from the very beginning in 2005 is starting no-till because they're bordering the Church farm and seeing [its success]. And these are good farmers. If you were to say, "who's the best farmer out there?" these are those farmers. And they saw the Blue Creek farm beating them. And then the soil erosion, I can't probably say enough about that, as you ad this tilth and organic matter your soils don't run away, especially if you have stubble. And stubble, and chaff and other things that come out of your combine when you're harvesting to stop that. This guy here has a farm over here and one afternoon there came a huge cloud over and dumped one inch of water in about twenty minutes. And he is on a western side hill and he had veins coming through all of that field that deep, water washed across the road into the Church farm. Now, that's what I mean. Here's his field, here's the road, here's the Church farm. We didn't have one bit of erosion at all, and we're on steeper ground than he is. I can't emphasize that enough, that along with the soil and helping the soil become more alive with the bacteria that you need and things like that. Yeah, those are probably fairly equal, and in my mind I might put the one above the other in erosion.

RG: In the de-laboring, it cuts out tilling?

CZ: Now, this side we're talking about the profit and loss side. You'd have to work this out, I haven't done it, but like you said: three men and during the harvest and that we usually had another person, but did Cary tell you they harvested how many loads a day? Semi-truck loads?

RG: He told me, I don't remember off the top of my head.

CZ: While I was there, I was responsible for building all the granaries there at that site. And when we started putting that up the neighbors thought we were crazy. "How are you ever going to fill them? You might fill one or two of them, but that's it. Why are you going to do that?" Well he filled them all plus thirty loads that he sent down to Salt Lake, or Kaysville.

RG: That's pretty remarkable.

CZ: Yeah, so some of these things are outlandish when they're looked at from the very beginning, but when the process is still going on. Now that was a good year, you don't have those all the time. And this year was the worst that some of those farmers have ever harvested. So back to back you had the best year and the worst year just the year after. I will have to say a dry farmer is so dependent on Mother Nature, and of course we know that the farms are blessed, but that doesn't mean we don't get hailed out. Ross, I'm going

to tell you something personal here that was hard on me. A drought coming and you don't see any rain. You have a beautiful, beautiful crop coming—grain that starts heading out, the head of wheat starts filling out, and the drought just continues with now rain. One of the hardest things to take is seeing that suffer to where it was burnt almost completely out. We never had a crop failure. But, day after day after day you go out there and see it dying, big spots where it had dropped out. So you're just tied to nature.

I could tell you some other things about the volunteers that come out. We had projects where, do you know what rye seed is? It's like wheat seed. They make rye bread out of it. Well somehow some of those kernels got in our seed wheat so the only way to get them out is to rogue it and that means volunteer labors come in and you span yourself and you go through these fields by hand walking and you have a bag tied to your belt and you pull it and clip the head off and put it in the bag. And so we relied on this volunteer help to come out and this one late afternoon after they got off work from their jobs and come out and I saw this one guy he had his two little sons. One son was able to go, but the other boy I thought, "He's not going to make it." So I was close to him as we were walking he had to carry him sometimes and this and that, but they managed. And by dark we came back in to where the buildings are there and I approached him and I asked, "Why in the world did you bring your kids with you?" He said "Clair, they're going to know more and learn more from this than any book or anything that you could teach them." And he was so humble and so willing to help those boys learn this that it was that's one of many things that comes, this tree farm and things like that, and when they come to help, the trucks and things that need to take place, it's humbling. They'll leave their work to come and do this.

RG: What do you think it is that motivates them?

CZ: Just like this brother and his two sons, he wanted to be an example to his sons and therefore the motivation was, "I'm going to take them with me even if I have to carry him all the way and the bag of rye. But not only that, the willingness. When you receive a call like that to come, it's not a call like in a ward, but it's a call when someone is needed. Like, you're an elder, they come in your elder's quorum and they say, "Who is going to go to the cannery?" No hands go up. Well finally they get a group together. "How many are going to go to the temple and clean the temple inside and out?" they have to hunt for names. So it's a willingness that you'll do whatever's asked of you no matter what. I think that lies at the heart of it all. And I'm not saying that you do those things only, maybe others are doing other things that you aren't well aware of. Maybe they take things to their home teaching families that you're not well aware of, but we don't note our giving, whether its labor like that on welfare farms or our things like our home teaching family needs. So, it's not to judge I guess, and that's important because one does other things other ways that's not said aloud for others to hear and your own proudness I guess.

RG: You mentioned how the Church farm wasn't necessarily spared drought or being hailed out, but you also mentioned that it is "blessed." Were there any examples or experiences that you remember where you were thinking, "Yeah, God is looking out for this farm" or was it always just farming as usual with the other neighbors?

CZ: In that thirty-two years we had multiple years where not only the stake that was over the farm (the Garland stake), but every stake in this region (there are five stakes here), fasted for that farm. And there were direct blessings that came. The drought didn't completely stop, but there were timely rains that came and in the thirty-two years I farmed we never had a crop failure where we didn't harvest something during that year. That's an important point of all this too. In the scriptures it says the rain comes to those that are good and those that are not, but lessons are learned when they don't come and you have five stakes fasting, a united effort like that. Sure those prayers and that fasting ascend, but with it comes a humbleness that you're part of others that see a need and are willing to spend twenty-four hours in a fast. They believe in the principle and doctrine of the fast. We fasted for Greg. His whole ward fasted for him.

Greg is an expert on a caterpillar tractor, the dozers that you see as you're passing the high way under construction. He's an expert in that. And he knows those like the back of his hand. He repairs and goes through all the motors and things like that. And Greg he's a kind of person that would be right there if something happened to anyone else. And I could tell you story after story of him and what happened to him on the Blue Creek farm.

One day he was coming home after work and it was kind of late afternoon and he always has a gun in his pickup. And as he was going home he saw this coyote and he pulled his gun out quick and was ready to shoot through the window and something said, "don't' pull that trigger." And he was just kind of taken back, so he got home and it still kind of was on his mind, so he took the gun and took it apart and leaf cutter bees and filled the barrel that the bullet would have never gone through there and probably blew up in his face.

But that's just one of many accounts. We've been on steep side hills where the combine is, you have to know the terrain out there in order to cut it right and be safe. We've been so blessed in the thirty-two years I was there we only had one accident that was reported. There were others were you cut your finger and things like that. Well, two. Greg Hurt his back so there were two that happened. We also had a combine burn up. That was probably the most major thing that happened over that time.

RG: Catch fire?

CZ: Yeah, it caught fire on the bearing. But there was definitely a protection and blessing that we knew we received as we spent our time there.

RG: So you say that the stewardship of the Blue Creek as switched to the different stakes in the area several times. Is there a reason for that? Just wanting to share the burden between the different stakes?

CZ: There was, but when the farm was bought the stake president that's named in here was the stake president of the Garland Stake. And so at that time there were only two stakes. In 1950, that was maybe seven years after the farm was bought, there was a new stake, there was a division in the Garland Stake and the new stake was called the South Bear River Stake, which is where we were at. So Garland and most of the area north and south clear to Brigham City, well to Corrine and Honeyville, there was the south stake. And at that time the Bear River South Stake was put in charge of it and was put in charge for a number of years, about twenty years. Maybe, twenty-five years. The south Bear River Stake was put in charge of it. Then, whether it was a new format, I don't know, but they then started moving it around to the stakes that are here. So that's how the rotation began. And it has come back to the Garland stake because they're the closest proximity to the farm. And I don't think there was any other reason than that they just wanted it spread around.

RG: And when a stake has a responsibility over the farm, what are their responsibilities?

CZ: Alright, there's what's called a farm committee. And in this committee there are about five brethren that are called on different aspect of the farm needs. And that committee meets once a month and goes over with the farm manager not only what's happened in the past, but what is coming up for the future. In that farm committee meeting we'd have all the assignments made for watering the trees, we'd have all assignments made for truck drivers to drive the trucks, and also this rye pulling and things like that. So that committee was an integral part and helped the Stake President know what's going on and also the farm manager relied on them really relied on them. At one time in this tree planting we maybe had fifty volunteers out there doing different things. So that represents that part of it. There's a stake clerk specifically assigned to that Church farm. And He takes care of all the records, he takes care of all the printing of the checks, and he doesn't sign them, but two of the members of the stake presidency signs them, there's a double signature.

RG: What checks? Your checks? The employee's checks?

CZ: No, my labor check used to come from there, but it stopped. And all checks for all the welfare employees come from Salt Lake. So he writes out all the bills and keeps track of all the records and we have a general audit every year once a year.

RG: So the farm's budget is run from the stake, not from Salt Lake?

CZ: No it's from Salt Lake. That changed too. When it stopped, the project wrote the checks to the employees it also wrote out checks to the repair people and things here in town. Everything now is out of Salt Lake.

Now let me back off here. The clerk, I don't think it's changed since I was there, I would meet with the clerk almost every week and prepare the bills for the month, and so in these times I would go up there we would have current bills that needed to be paid and we would pay those out of a checking account the Church has here with Wells Fargo. So in that respect those bills come out, but for major items like equipment and all that that doesn't come through that. It's mainly the running of the farm itself is where those checks come out.

RG: So the financing of the big stuff?

CZ: The budget and everything is cleared through Salt Lake.

RG: When you were building the big storage bins down there, when was that and how much were you involved? Did you hire it out to a contractor?

CZ: That was thought about because when winter came—and this happened to me until that facility was built there—I could not get into the farm in the winter. So there was repairs and things like that which you need to do in the shop. So I thought through this and I approached the brethren about moving a location, another location that is year round. And we picked two or three sights our and settled on that one. And it just so happened that that was in a realtor's hands and there was a private bid, so you had to phone call your bid in. So our stake presidency under the direction of the brethren…no, no, the brethren in Salt Lake were on the phone as the bid was going on and they placed the highest bid and got that property. And then from there came the question, "What are we going to put on it?" It was a bare piece of property. There was an old home there that we fired and burned to the ground and then cleaned everything up and leveled everything off and there it sat and then we formed a proposal to put in a wonderful shop and storage for fertilizer. And so that's there and then as this ground started coming we didn't have the bin capacity to hold it all and the Church didn't want it sent down because they were in a every year it goes that way when the harvest comes the bins are full and the Church couldn't handle it. So the proposal was made to put these bins in and they are the state of the art. You can put wet grain in there and dry it and not hurt the grain at all. Each of those bins has an air flow system that goes through the floor and up through the full canopy of wheat in the bin. And it will not let any wheat, as long as it's running right, spoil. And then there are monitors on there to check as long as there is wheat in there, so you can tell if there's moisture and low temperature. In fact, when you're harvesting, say it's August, and you're 100 degrees, well that bin gets hot because it's metal, but you have

the moisture sensors in there to tell you to start your fans to blow cool air in the evening through the wheat that's inside. It's a wonderful operation.

RG: How many bushels can each bin hold?

CZ: They're 50’000 a bin, so 250’000 thousand bushels.

RG: And you eventually get all that grain down to Kaysville or Idaho?

CZ: Yes, following the harvest when the wheat is in the bins out there the Church 's grain division takes charge of it. It's no longer yours. And they will say, "Ok, with this wheat we'd like you to hold it there because our granaries are still full and we'll bring it in in the spring or earlier if needed.” So they then plan from that point on to take it when it's needed, and usually in the early spring they'll haul it all out. And sometimes it goes to Burly, there's a strategic storage in Burly Idaho, just out of Burly. And then they have strategic storages in Salt Lake and also in Kaysville. And it depends on the quality of the wheat where they want to put it, where they decided to go with it. The best milling quality wheat goes into Kaysville.

RG: And just one last question. As a private farmer and a manager for the Church, was there a difference in how you felt about your work or approached your work working for someone else, versus working for yourself on your own property? Or was it all just one and the same for you?

CZ: Well, you know Ross, some of the principles are similar. I will say that. But when you look at the welfare program of the Church there's a difference, whether it's your farm or the Lord's farm. But the principles of growing the best crops that you can grow are the same. The principle of fasting, [for example]. When we had our farms we'd fast for our own farms, along with others that would be in the same situation. But a personal ownership of land, you know, it varies Ross because some farms are not very well farmed and some are the most immaculate and best farms and they grow the best crops. A lot of it depends on the person and if they want to grow the best. And that principle was what we wanted in the welfare farms. These are the Lord's farms and they were there for a purpose. If you remember back, what were the three directions of the Church at one time? Missionary Work, Perfecting the Saints, Saving the Dead. Well do you know when the fourth one was added? Care for the poor and the needy. President Monson knew how valuable that was and wanted that included as the fourth pillar of the Church. So when you ask that question, how would I treat my own farm alongside a managed welfare farm? there's really important items both ways. And just like that scripture, the rain is going to come to those that lived the best life as well as those that don't. And you're just hoping that you just know the value of work and know that as a husband one of your most important roles is to provide for your wife and your family. And you can take that to the welfare side and say, "Yeah, this farm is to take care of the poor and the needy and

the widow." So there's kind of an integration back and forth, and I've always had a dad and a mother that sought their sons and daughters to do the best they can, be the best they can and live lives that are good and when something happens to another that you're there. Anyways, that’s a hard question to really tie down.

RG: No, that's great. Before we end, we could have another conversation later on, is there anything you wanted to add that you haven't been able to share yet about Blue Creek and you're work there?

CZ: Give me a few days to think about that. Because I'm sure there is. This has been kind of spontaneous; we haven't had a lot of preparation time of what was going to be asked and how I was going to answer it. So give me a few days to think about that. Because I'm sure there is. I've given you some really personal experiences that are tender.

RG: Yeah, I will type this interview and give it to you and then you can edit it and say what you don't want on the record. And I can delete that. So you have complete control over what is made public.

CZ: That would be wonderful.

RG: Great, Well Thank you Clair. This has been Ross Garner with Clair Zollinger and it's been a good interview.

APPENDIX C

GARNER FAMILY GARDEN INTERVIEWS

Makenna James Interview

(This interview took place November 3rd, 2017 in the home of Makenna James in Salt Lake City, Utah).

Ross Garner (RG): Ok, this is Ross Garner with Makenna James at her home in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is for Ross Garner's Thesis Project on Mormon Agriculture, both family gardens and welfare farms. And Makenna, could you just state your full name and year of birth for the record.

Makenna James (MJ): My name is Makenna Sheree James. And my birthdate is September 2, 1987

RG: Thank you. Tell me a little bit about your family, where you fit in with your brothers and sisters, as well as your current family.

MJ: I am the third child of seven kids, six that they raised to full maturity. So technically, because we lost the first one, I was the second oldest. And I am the only girl in the family, so I have five brothers. And, yeah, we came from the Garners.

RG: And what is your family gardening experience? How long have you been involved in gardening?

MJ: I know that mom and dad made us do it when we were little, but I don't remember much of it when we were little. When we were little, little—like under four. But I can remember that it was just always there. And I felt like it always got bigger with how bigger our family got, which meant more work for all of us. And it was just what we did. It was life and growing up the whole time that's just where it was. We were there gardening every year.

RG: OK. Do you have an earliest memory of gardening? You said you probably did it when you were too young to remember anything, but when you think of gardening is there a specific memory that comes to mind.

MJ: Umm, I can't remember anything when I was little. I remember the fun things we did when we were older. When we were in the ten year old ages or maybe eight to ten range, is when the memories start coming. That's when we would start doing things that really made us enjoy it together. We started playing name that tune when we were picking peas or beans. And then we would watch our favorite old moves while we shucked corn or

shelled the peas or snapped the beans. Those were our favorite go-tos. I remember trying to get out of work by being the baby watcher, "I'll go watch the baby." You know getting to play on the swing set or play with the baby somehow. So those types of things are what I love and cherries and remember the most. That's definitely the warm fuzzies that I get when I think about gardening.

RG: What was the gist of the game, Name that tune. And what types of tunes would you play it with.

MJ: So, name that tune is where one person is it and you take turns. And whoever is it has to sing like five notes of the song, they can whistle it, they don't sing the words, they can hum it, they just can't say the words. And then everyone has to try and guess it. And then whoever guesses it gets to pick what song they do next. It could be anything from Disney movies to musicals to old movies that we loved, all those that had songs and music.

RG: What movies do you remember watching frequently?

MJ: Of course we did Disney a ton, we knew every Disney song. Newsies was huge, because I had five brothers, so we sang Newsies a lot. But you know, sometimes we did some of the old stuff, some of the old movies I would say. Sometimes musicals, it just depended on if we were really on it I guess.

RG: And getting out of work by tending younger children, I take it that work was easier or more fun for you? Why would you prefer that work over garden work?

MJ: Yeah, because garden work can get pretty boring if nobody is in the mood for playing games and you're just sitting there moving along, bending over while you're trying to pick peas and beans can hurt your back, and it's just not as much fun versus getting to play with the baby. Babies are always awesome.

RG: OK. Along those lines, what's a least favorite memory or aspect of gardening?

MJ: Well, it's just a lot of work. It's just never ending work it feels like. And I probably didn't like getting dirty. I was a really girly girl, so I didn't like the manure crap and I didn't like doing anything that had to do really heavy work, lifting stuff. Yeah. So probably the end, end season when you have to rip everything out and spread the manure, that wasn't my thing.

RG: Ok. When you think about your family garden growing up, who was the instigator of the garden?

MJ: That was Mom. Mom was so hard working and the reason it ran was because she paid attention to it. It was a living thing. It was like a giant that lived outside of our house

that you had to pay attention to. And Mom definitely was the driving force behind it. If anything needed to be done she and dad discussed it and she'd get on Dad's case if it didn't get done. I know the gardening definitely came from Dad, started from dad because he grew up with that. So probably when they first got married they talked and that was something mom probably wanted to do, but at the end of the day because she was a home school Mom and home all the time a lot of the work was up to her to get it done. Because there's only so many hours in the day, when Dad gets home at night there's only so much he can do. So, definitely Mom.

RG: Do you remember specific ways mom motivated you in the work or was it self-motivation?

MJ: It just felt like something we had to do to get done and it was something we had to get done. Sometimes it was fun, but I think a lot of times we were wanting to get going to go play with friends and stuff, so we couldn't go play with friends until whatever needed to get done was done. Just like any little kid needs to through with their chores, right. So if you want to go play with your friends you have to get your chores done. And, when we were younger, that was the motivation, but when we got a little bit older it became apparent, like when we're in our teens, we'd done it long enough that finally we understood that we could see "Oh yeah, there is a lot of stuff to get done. So if mom is asking me to do this then we all need to pitch in to get it done so that it’s done." So its the essence that you see something that needs to be done and you do it. You see it, you observer and then you go to work and get it done—mostly under her direction. But it was more of a group effort at that point. We'd learned long enough and through other things like lawn mowing where we had to work together to help each other get the work done. So just get in and get the work done. That's definitely what the feel was later on, so it didn't really need any motivation any more, we could see it and knew it needed to be done.

RG: Before you mentioned some chores that you preferred and chores you didn't. Were there some chores that were yours, specifically assigned to you or was it all a free for all where there's some jobs that one person did and some jobs another person did?

MJ: As far as I know, we never really had assigned jobs that we did every time routinely. It was always whatever needed to be done. You know, "Run out there and do that, get this done." I think sometimes we had times with the chickens that we were assigned because they were animals and we could do that. Like with the garden, it could be vague, you know, you could get so many rows weeded. You had to weed like two rows or something like that. But it wasn't like, that is your job every single time. It was, "we're all going out there to do it, and just get your two rows done and we'll be done." It's not your spot here, it’s just “We're all going to go out there and we're all working together.”

RG: Can you maybe just list a couple of the types of jobs that you did as a group then?

MJ: Weeding was a huge, never ending one because we had all the garden in the back and the front island. So that was always a problem. And they had different systems then where we had to weed otherwise it would go crazy. And so weeding was huge, but then picking the produce is a group effort. Mom pretty much took care of watering stuff. She had to keep track of where the water was. She might have made the assignment to go switch the hoses every now and then, but I don't ever remember doing it. She might have sent one of you guys, but she had to keep track of where it was mentally, otherwise it would run awry. And then like ripping things out was always a group thing. Planting the seeds—group. Weeding it—group. Picking the produce—group. Harvesting it and ripping everything out was always a group effort. So I don't really remember any singleness to it.

RG: Do you remember any specific tools that you used to do that kind of work?

MJ: Shovels were always the go-tos. Mostly, weeding was rip it out with your hands or pokers. Pokers were good for weeding because you could dig down deep with those and use it with your hand to get it out. But with the planting you need a good hoe because it could make a good trough for the rows. And then they had the soaker hoses. Dad got the tractor, that's a tool that helped in the harvest season and in the beginning and end of the season. But we mostly used our hands for everything else. There's not much else you can do when you're picking stuff and ripping stuff up. It's mostly just your hands.

RG: I'm wondering if you could talk to me a little bit about the *why* behind the family garden that you perceived growing up? Why were mom and dad gardening and asking us to help them with the garden?

MJ: Well, I think that huge aspect of it was raising enough food for our family to last for the rest of the year. And that it would be good produce that we could depend on that we knew what had happened to it. And it tasted so much better than anything else at the store and anything you could buy in a can. I think being obedient to what the prophets have said about gardening that you should have a garden and that it helped you have food storage for a year. So those were the main aspects that I felt, but there's so many underlying efforts that never always get discussed but were definitely there. Like just the bonding time that it required for all of us to be out there doing it obviously made us a stronger family than a lot of the other families we saw.

You know, as we grew up and met other people I've met other people who are so isolated. They all have a TV in their own room and never eat meals together as a family. They all just separate and go in their own rooms and watch TV. And I couldn't ever imagine that because it was always what we just did together. Even if we did watch a show it was all together and doing something with our hands while we were doing it was always

important because there was always so much to do. So it definitely made us hard workers, cause there was always something to do and then it bonded us together because you just did that, it's what you do even though as you get older and are transition and definitely love your friends and love the things you're interested in, but at the end of the day you always come back and do certain things like make apple sauce during General Conference time. You always, always come back. When it's time to do corn you come back and do the corn and stay up late. I didn't really get to do watering turn like you boys did. Maybe once. I don't ever remember having to do watering turn, but that was a huge thing you guys had to do, to bond over that. Staying up late weird hours to get it done and freezing your butts off together to do it. There's something in having to do hard stuff together that bonds people together just like hiking up a mountain bonds people. So, it was definitely that bondingness I'm sure was part of their plans when they gardened and chose to garden.

RG: Great. The garden was obviously a big unity thing for the family. Was it ever extended to friends or the community? What was the garden's relationship to the neighborhood?

MJ: You know, because we couldn't go play with our friends before it got done, friends were home on summer vacation or they were home early from school, they had break, those things had to be done. Occasionally they'd come and help us. Nobody could really last very long, they'd do it for a little bit, but they never lasted very long they never got it all the way done. But I think people could see that and experience it where they didn't have that in their own families. So they could be like, "Wow, so this is a pea and this is how you do that and get it out." You know, things like that. And then, when harvest time comes that's always huge because there's always so much extra too. So we were always taking it around to the neighbors in the wagon and the wheelbarrow and sharing what we had. And I think that it was inspiring to a lot of the neighbors and I think it was also hard because I'm sure a lot of them wanted to try and do justice to what gardening is but nobody can really do justice, you just have to do your best especially with just how unpredictable gardening can be. And so, some of the other gardeners in our community area would have some things that worked really well, but never like full on gardens that worked very well. But I’m sure it was always inspiring to driving around the corner and see that huge garden. Not that they have to keep up with the Garners. But that's what it could be.

RG: So other people gardened in the community?

MJ: A few others did, yes. The Clarks had their general tomato garden. The Andersons had their corn field. So they'd do one thing really well, but rarely like a lot of different things like we always did. Lots of people had fruit trees that we would get blessed by

because our fruit trees never worked. But yeah, they might have a couple plants, but nothing ever as big as our garden.

RG: What types of fruit would you get from your neighbors?

MJ: Grapes, pears, peaches sometimes. Those were mostly the ones around us. Apricots. Apples and oranges always came from the fruit man on the truck.

RG: And what produce would you share with neighbors generally?

MJ: Zucchini, squashes of all kinds, peppers, and tomatoes, because you get tons of tomatoes, it just depended on how much mom used. When we were younger and we didn't go through as much stuff, you know, we were just slowly and slowly getting bigger so their appetites got bigger. But when we were younger she had lots of tomatoes and peppers. So those would go around. But usually corn and broccoli, those things were precious so we kind of had to keep those. Mostly squash.

RG: did you have a favorite fresh fruit or vegetable from the garden or canned?

MJ: I always loved our corn. It was so good fresh on the cob or even after it was frozen. Still tasted so much better, so sweet and soft and small, it's not that hard large kernels like you get at the store. And the juices were all sweet. I loved our peas. It depended on what we were eating. I loved our broccoli with our Alfredo sauce like we used to make. But I always loved peaches, I love peaches. They always taste better after you cook them and can them because it gets all the fuzzies off and they have that sweeter taste after you've cooked them. Applesauce was always good. I liked the peaches; I think they were my favorite.

RG: Peaches were your favorite canned fruit?

MJ: O, and the pears. O man, when we started doing pears, because that didn't come on till later, they were so good and so sweet.

RG: Did you preserve any vegetables or did you just eat everything fresh?

MJ: Yes, so we would blanch and freeze broccoli, peas, and corn. So those were our main vegetables that mom could preserve. Tomatoes were via salsa or just canned tomatoes for using for spaghetti sauces. But we never made the actual sauce and canned it, because we always made the sauce fresh. Those are the main vegetables that we preserved. Mostly fruit could be preserved. Fruit in every form could be frozen, canned, mostly canned. Our jams were awesome: strawberry, raspberry. Always strawberry jam was the best.

RG: Did you dry any?

MJ: Yep. Dried apples, dried apricots for fruit leather, dried plums for fruit leather, pried pears. We did bananas a couple times, but I hated dried bananas, they weren't very good, besides, we didn't grow them. Those were the main ones we dehydrated.

RG: Do you remember mom teaching you specifically how to can, or is that something that you just kind of followed instructions on.

MJ: I think we probably did it once or twice for assignments for Young Women's, like "Learn a new skill, learn how to can." And it was like, "O yeah, we learned how to can this year." But it was always sort of like what we were doing anyway. And we did it so many times and the processes are so simple but they're so easy to forget so that even now that I'm grown I still have to call mom and ask, "How do we do that again?" And then you remember, and you're like, "O yeah, I remember, I can do this."

RG: So what kind of equipment or tools were needed to preserve?

MJ: Lots of jars. We needed lots of glass jars. So I always highly prize glass jars if people give them away than you keep them because you need every last one. And you need the lids and the steamer and a juicer if you're going to do grape juice, and you need the pressure cooker for canned beans down stairs. Yeah, you have to have the pressure cooker for doing beans. We needed that big pot for making apple sauce, we need the food processor, the Victoria strainer for making applesauce, several tools that you need for processing and canning goods.

RG: Great. So were you ever entrusted with a certain crop or aspect of the garden or were all management decisions made by mom and dad?

MJ: Yeah, it was all managed by mom and dad as far as I could remember. I was usually in with mom canning and doing stuff, that was usually where she kept me and wanted me so I would learn it cause the females were usually the ones that made that happen. So I remember that was pretty much that was an assignment, it was me in there with mom. But everyone else would help too when they could if it was needed.

RG: In your opinion, what is the most important aspect of gardening? In your opinion what is the most important aspect of gardening to make it successful and a good experience?

MJ: There's so many facets. You have to be able to roll with whatever nature gives you. It can be so disappointing when your crops don't come up and you don't get the produce like you were planning on. Lots of years we'd have low peas and high this, it was a give and take back and forth thing. But at the end of the day it was our bonding thing, that which we do, getting everybody involved as a family is important and key to making it feel like you own it, you all own this thing and it all depends on all of your help. And

striving to do that as positively as you can. Most of the time it kind of felt like we were forced into it when we were young, so that was kind of hard. It's worked to where we could finally get to a point that said, this is just how we work, this is how adults function, this is how we all will contribute to society as we work together as a group to get stuff done.

RG: How have you seen the garden change in how they garden change or has it changed over time?

MJ: I garden very differently from the way we were raised. But Mom and Dad do things entirely different now. Like I was trying to help mom just this weekend and I thought she said, "Ok, you need to put the fertilizer in the place where the rows are going to be where we are going to plant." And when we used to plant things rows went down in the ground like this, we'd dig a trough. And she said, no Makenna, this is where the water is where the water goes. And I said, “Ahh, I don't know where it goes anymore.” And it’s on top of all these sticks and I wonder if it’s going to grow in all this sticks and stuff. But it grows.

They've really changed so much of the way they garden based on their Back to Eden book. They haven't changed a lot of what they garden, it is still a lot of the same, corn and squash and tomatoes and peppers, and beans. They've added a couple new things like parsnips and eggplant and things that we didn't used to eat as much when we were younger. They've changed their diet they try and incorporate as many vegetables as they can. They try things like blueberries, but the blueberries didn't work out. They've tried a couple new things as far as what they grow but as far as how they grow it they've changed everything. They don't have to weed anymore because of all the sticks and the way they water is completely different. And the way that they might cage things like the berries. The berries moved so many times and then they finally got where they could function and boxed them up a bit. And they are definitely very good at evolving and trying to perfect their gardening tactics.

RG: Speaking to perfect the gardening tactics. Do you know why they choose to make so many changes over time? What motivates it?

MJ: Gardening, you want it to be successful. It's so much work it would be nice if you get the produce that you like. So I definitely think trying to get the produce that you like is a huge motivation and knowing each individual plant and how it functions and what it needs is huge and key. I'm learning that even in my small gardening zone. I have no idea what these plants need, why is it doing this? What do I need to give it to (fill in the blank)? They've done it so many times now that they know generally if they do a lot of these different types of things it's going to be better for the whole garden and then with certain plants they can focus on them a little bit better doing different tactics. It just

produces better and you really do want that especially now that they don't have as big a work force to come help them all the time.

RG: Now that you've started creating your own family, has gardening played a role and in what way?

MJ: Yes, I always wanted to recreate that for my family, for my sons. It was a huge motivator it still is a huge motivator in where we choose to live. Trying to have just a little bit of space where we can have boxes or pots or whatever and how much I invest in it, whether I do a lot of pots or not. I knew that it would be important for the boys and I always wanted them to have that, but a lot of the times we just can't quite get that with our pots, they're really self-maintained. So, if they want most of those experiences I have to take them out to the big family garden to have those.

RG: So you do some kind of container gardening, what types of plants you tried to grow?

MJ: I've only done those things that I know that I'll use or that my neighbor, who we share it with will use. So we try and do a big steak tomato that our neighbor likes for his sandwiches. Then I do a Roma tomato. We do zucchini and yellow squash and I have lots of herbs that my mom has given me that I try to maintain. We always try and get basil and cilantro, thing you go through a lot. But this year we did an eggplant, we did a broccoli, and we did kale, and some peppers which I gave back to mom because they're just cayenne and there's no way I'm going to eat any of those. But she gave those starts to me and I just didn't want to see those little starts die.

The Church, our church, has a community garden so we can literally walk a couple blocks down the street to go garden there if we choose and they have community watering where they'll hook it up to the system and you just have to pay into it so you wouldn't have to worry about watering it every day. But I haven't been able to go that far because it's always been in my back yard and I still have little, little kids and when it gets so hot you just can't step outside I just don't see myself walking a couple blocks that way and over that way to try and garden over there with three little boys who are young. So I opted to keep it all in my back yard where I could control it and oversee it better. But even for how small my garden is how much ownership I have to have over it, it's my thing, and whether it lives or dies it proves how faithful I am to going out there and at least watering it once a day. And usually that happens when all the kids are asleep and it's cool and dark outside and I can get it done. But it was definitely faith promoting to me to be consistent even if I fail in so many other aspects this plant is alive at least because I came out here every day and watered it. So, it was faith promoting for sure.

RG: So this has been a project instigated by you and taken on by you mainly?

MJ: Yes, my husband, bless his heart, doesn't know. He just wasn't raised with any gardening at all. His dad gardens now with a little bit of land they have. And they used to do some pots in their house where we once lived as well. But he never had time, he was always working as a doctor, so there was never any time to be a gardener even though his father was raised on a farm. So Ian doesn't really know anything about gardening, so if it's going to happen I have to make it happen.

RG: So, in the remaining time, is there something or anything that you prepared or wanted to say that you haven't had the chance to say about gardening and its role in your life?

MJ: I feel like it bonds people for sure. And it helps teach kids how to work hard, which is a vital skill that I just can't produce. And it's just so helpful to have a garden that just exists so that it's there to learn how to work hard. Cause, no matter what I do, there's not enough stuff around this house and this city to teach them how to work hard. And so those: bonding and working hard, are the two things that I want for my kids so I hope to have those someday when we get to move to a bigger house and have some land, a little bit of land. I don't know if we'll ever produce anything as large as our family, but that's the goal to teach them hard work and bond and love each other and work together. And learn and grow really, because it's always a learning process as we discussed. It's a learning process, it's changing, it's evolving. You learn so much about God in it, you learn so much about how merciful He is, or how plants grow, it's all a part of creation, a part of heavenly Father's plan. Whenever I'm outside I'm a much happier person. I can feel and sense Him. Instead of living out of a world I've created out of a box I can live in the world that He created and I'm a much better person that way, and I can feel him closer.

RG: Real quick follow up questions, did you ever feel like you had any god moments or spiritual experiences in the garden?

MJ: Yes. When I got old enough as a teen, moving closer to when it was time to leave I was definitely a romantic. I am a romantic type and so we would often thing, "O, if we had chickens we could go out and feed the chickens" and it’s so like a pilgrim or a pioneer, and it would be so cool. And then you get it and these things stink and this is gross. But when I would walk around in the grass and see their beautiful trees and smell the cut grass and see the tall corn waving you can't help but and have a euphoric type of experience where it's so green and beautiful, the beautiful big leaves of the grape vines and they're huge. And you can walk out your front door and pick a berry if you wanted to. Living in that type of environment is heavenly. It feels like it's a piece of heaven. I mean God put Adam on earth and he said, "You need to take care of this earth." and It's definitely a part of his plan and you definitely feel that when you learn to take care of things. Then you appreciate them and you can see how beautiful they are. And even when

they die, like even in the fall when things start dying, it's a beautiful experience the whole cycle. And as you see it over and over it prepares you for what you are. That you live, you come and you die. And definitely, living close to the plants, close to the garden helps you come to understand God, just a little bit better.

RG: Great. Thanks you. Again, this has been Ross Garner with Makenna James and thank you very much for your time.

Christy Garner Interview

(This interview took place November 4th, 2017 in Christy Garner's home in Bluffdale, Utah).

Ross Garner (RG): This is Ross Garner with Christy Garner in her home in Bluffdale, Utah. The date is November 4th, 2017 and this project is in relation to Ross Garner's Thesis project on Mormon Agriculture, both welfare farms and family gardens. Christy, if you could just state your full name and the year of your birth for the record.

Christy Garner (CG): Christine Louise Garner, I was born March 12th, 1962.

RG: Thank you. If you could just give us some context, please describe your current family situation as far as how many kids you have.

CG: We have six children, six living children and one that's deceased. Currently none of them are living in the home and so David and I are working to try and manage our property now, though I can't say all by ourselves because our kids do come home on weekends especially when we have big projects that need to be done like pulling everything out of the garden, or harvesting potatoes and things like that. So we're not completely on our own.

RG: Ok. And of your children how many are boys and girls?

CG: Including our deceased we had six boys and one girl.

RG: What is your gardening heritage experience with your family? Have you always gardened? When did you decide you first wanted to garden?

CG: So as a child, my family attempted to garden. My mother's parents always had a garden so we always knew of their garden and my maternal grandmother's father and mother always had a garden. Growing up we'd always go over to that community garden that they worked on. I remember eating rhubarb as a little girl, pulling it out of the ground and eating it with salt. And just those experiences I had with my great grandfather in a community garden, they lived in subsidized housing or a community housing, and there was a big garden plot that the people could all go garden together. I don't really remember helping Grandpa Miller garden, but I remember being in the garden and I remember the rhubarb and I remember those experiences.

Then I remember my grandpa and grandma Ewing's garden. It was just always there and we always canned and put stuff up and that was just a part of their life, was the garden. My mother, herself, wasn't particularly someone who was fond of outdoor work; gardening and yard work—she didn't like it at all. So growing up I did a lot more of that. So from a child's perspective, I didn't have a lot of knowledge, I didn't know what I was

doing. So the garden could only produce so much. And once we moved up to our last house we didn't do any gardening there, I just did all the yard work and planted everything at that new house.

CG: I always had a real interest in working the soil and seeing things grow even though my own direct family didn't do a lot of it. There is a heritage of that in my family. And my dad's family were ranchers and farmers. They had dairy cows and milk cows, and raised alfalfa and corn for silage and so when we went out the Wheeler farm there was always machinery and stuff going on out there. They didn't have a garden per se, a house garden up by the house, but they always had farming and had the milk cows so I had experiences from that side of the family growing up being exposed to that lifestyle and that kind of work. Though again, in my personal family we didn't do that. We did have a period where we had cows. We didn't milk them, they were beef cows, but we had to feed the baby calves milk and take care of them and. I just had that kind of background doing that as a little kid and having that experience.

When David and I got married and were trying to establish what our priorities were and what we wanted to do as a couple, these influences played on me and my thought process and what I kind of envisioned our family being able to do. We rented to begin with and of course those years we weren't able to do a garden, but David's brother's wife's family all had a garden and we would come over and help work on their garden and get some produce from them because we would come over and work on their garden. When we bought our plot of land and got our house built and started trying to develop our property, then we started growing our own garden, because, for my personality it was easier for me to manage the garden I wanted to manage it instead of just working under somebody else who was in charge. So we left doing it with the group and started working on our own. I can't say that we had an overall vision to begin with, we just started working what was manageable for us at that point for us in our lives with little kids and trying to finish the house and work and school and all those things that we were involved in.

So the garden started out relatively small with just a few things. Then the neighbors bought the property next door so we kind of had to move the garden over to a new section because part of what we were gardening was on their property, it had all just been open before and that was just an open lot. So when they started building we moved the garden over to the new section where it is now and it began to grow bigger.

It’s kind of been an evolutionary process and I'd like to say we were visionary enough that we had this big vision in mind and developed it that way, but it really wasn't. It just kind of evolved. And since we were both not too bright about gardening, David came from a family that loved to garden, his dad had a PhD in agriculture so his family always had a garden, so he had a gardening background too, but again as a kid you only get so much knowledge about actual gardening practices. It is limited, you are learning other

things, you are at school and parents are mostly in charge of the garden with your assistance. Gardens are kind of just an experiment and you just start learning. And you read and study and go buy things and ask lots of questions to people who garden and then you just start trying them.

CG: So that's kind of how our philosophy has been. And whether it's watering, I mean we have tried multiple different ways and approaches to watering whether it's to adding organic material or what you're adding to the soil in terms of fertilizer and organic material in terms of cultivating or not cultivating, there's just a lot of different approaches to farming, and we've just kind of been open minded where we weren't solidly entrenched in one way. Also David grew up in the East and I grew up in the West and we live in the West, so there's definitely some practices his family had that we couldn't implement because they didn't have water issues. They didn't have to worry about watering whereas we do here. So how your garden is set up is really dependent on your water source and how you're able to water. So a lot of choices that we made were centered around that issue of water.

One of our philosophies as a family that David and I felt strongly about was the idea that children will be less likely to get into problems if they have constructive work to do. And so we made a conscious decision from the very get-go that we would be involved with our children and the garden was a great venue for that to happen. Garden and animals both, we had chickens. When you have opportunities like that to work your children they have to learn lessons that they wouldn't learn other ways. For instance, chickens have to be fed and watered no matter what, no matter what, whether it's cold out, whether it's miserable out, whether you have twenty million other things to do. If you have chickens they have to be taken care of and we wanted our children to get the feeling that sometime you just have to do what has to be done, whether you want to do it or not, just because it needs to be done for that animal to exist. So we made decisions about those types of things so that our kids would have those kinds of experiences.

It’s the same with the garden. When it has to be watered, it has to be watered, When it has to be weeded it has to be weeded. And during the summer kids don't like to get up early, but that was one way to teach children to discipline their bodies is that it is much easier to weed early in the morning than it was to get up late and then be hot. And I remember having an experience with our youngest son Tanner, and probably it's typical, sometimes as parents you have a harder time being quite as strict with the younger children as you do the older children, or there's just different tendencies and characteristics in each child, but Tanner wasn't inclined to want to get up early in the morning, that was a hard thing for him. And so I remember one day after he finally got up I went out and weeded with him in the corn. And that's probably another philosophy I had is I didn't just send my children out to work by themselves. I felt like if I was going to teach them a principle and if they were going to do the work right I needed to be there

with them. So even though I had gotten up early and had already weeded I went out when it was hot with Tanner and as he was complaining about being out there and hot and miserable in the corn we just had some discussion about life choices and just how the choices we make determine our comfort in life and our happiness in life and sometimes what we think is harder like getting up earlier is really the easier thing than being out when it is so hot and miserable trying to do the work then. So, there's just a lot of life learning processes and teaching your children how to work and working with them.

CG: I remember one year, we had changed the configuration of the garden to run north and south instead of east and west, and we did this on the principle that we wanted to flood irrigate instead of trying to use the soaker hoses. So when we started doing the big garden we used soaker hoses and those hoses worked really well and we had a great garden with the soaker hoses. But eventually those soaker hoses got plugged up and we had to buy new ones. And they quit making them the way they used to. The new soaker hoses were very flimsy and if they got too much pressure they popped holes and then we were fixing them all the time and then they'd just pop on the side that you fixed them. So we just felt like we had to go to something else since they changed how they manufactured the soaker hoses. Again, like I said, every time we change the garden it seems like it centers around the watering issue. And so we wanted to pump with the big trash pump out of the ditch and put it through a big white pipe with the openings so that we could flood. Anyway the guy that was helping us set up the pipe and get it all ready, he brought in several dump truck loads of horse manure, and dumped it all through the garden and then worked at trying to get the drainage right, the flow right so that it would flow down to the end of the garden. Well, that horse manure had not been composted and the next spring there was many a tear, many a tear shed that next spring because we had grass everywhere. The garden was just covered in grass and we had to spend hours and hours and hours out there weeding because it all came up in grass. And I was out there with the boys and we were just bawling, just bawling the whole time we were weeding because it was so overwhelming. The whole row was just one mass of grass. And it was just so overwhelming we could hardly cope with it, it was very challenging to even be able to cope with that. We had great potatoes though, haha. There was nourishment in the manure, but there was also grass seed, so we had some great crops, but it was pretty overwhelming. I remember we took pictures and felt such delight that the water made all the way to the end of the one hundred foot row and that only happened after we did a lot of digging and hoeing to make the little culverts a little deeper to get it down there. But that was a great accomplishment to us to see that water run down those rows and bring nourishment to the soil.

I'm wondering all over the place. I guess one thought leads to another.

CG: Maybe I should kind of talk about some of the positive ways that we saw in gardening. When the soaker hoses worked it really was an efficient way to water because

we just used the culinary water. We had an adapter head that could take four hoses and so we could run four rows as a time and you just turn it on low and just let it run for a bunch of hours. And then we'd move the hose down to the next ones. The garden did really well that way and when we watered that way where we planted was depressed compared to the rest of the garden. So we would dig down and plant and leave it depressed so that the hoses could lay down in that depression and the water would stay in that lower area instead of flooding out on top. In between the rows would be flat, and the row itself would then be depressed. So it really was a good way to water because it kept all the water right on the plant and we weren't wasting water. So we were really quite discouraged with the soaker hoses changed and they just didn't work. They didn't hold up like we needed them to hold up.

Draw backs to that system were that it was a total hassle every spring and every fall picking up all the hoses and winding them up and having a place to store them all winter. That's a total hassle. That's not fun. That was a huge job. And of course, when you store them and you roll them they get kinks in them and then next year where the kinks are we have holes. Managing them when we weren't using them was the challenge with the soaker hoses. And just the added work of cleaning them up and putting them down.

The challenges with watering with the culverts and the irrigation water is just that it's a real big pain. The culverts had to be kind of deep to get the water to run all the way down and it's just a pain trying to walk in between those culverts and not break down the soil into the culverts and have a place to walk because in between the culverts you have plants. So it was really a lot more challenging to work in the garden itself to have a place to walk and stand when you're trying to harvest. That was a big challenge. So that's a hard part too.

It's probably been close to ten years, we got exposed to a man named Paul [Gautschi], I can't remember his last name now. Anyway, he gardened in a way called Back to Eden. And he is a man of God that is very familiar with the Bible and God and he had moved to a new place and was trying to figure out how to water because he didn't have enough water to do his garden. And they moved to this place to be independent and raise all their own food. So he went into the forest which surrounds his property and was pondering and studying and reading in there and asking God how to manage the land so that it would be self-sustaining and his answer came there in the forest by looking at the forest bed, As he studied it he realized that where ever nature is it has a covering on the ground, it isn't just left bare and exposed. There's pine needles, there's leaves, there's dead wood breaking down, there's animal droppings, there's all kinds of things that makes up the soil bed of the forest and God brought it to his mind that that's how he could be successful with his own garden with very little water if he created a covering for the soil. So he did that with chipped wood and compost, manure, and organic material like leaves, all kinds of things added into that. He first did his orchard that way and it needed very little water, but for

some reason he didn't implement that in his garden. He was only thinking of his orchard and didn't think of his garden and he was struggling with his garden trying to manage the weeds and the watering. And God gently reminded him that this would work in his garden also. And so he then did it in his garden.

CG: As we studied his works and what he did we really felt like those were true principles, they resonated with our spirit and resonated with the idea of making the land sustainable so that year after year you could plant and you wouldn't have it depleted. And so we undertook to do that. We'd already planted the early garden so we couldn't do it on that half of the garden, but we went to the landfill and purchased composted material and we laid that across the garden four inches thick. And our garden is probably about a quarter of an acre. It's going to be more than that now. We're extending and doing a permaculture and it will easily be a half acre of garden. So it was a lot of work and it was a lot of expense bringing all that compost. Four inches thick is a lot of compost to lay down. So we did that on the summer side of the garden. We did four inches of composted material and then we did four inches of wood chips on top.

So the composted material, what you're doing is you're creating a new soil bed and it's also because it's so dark and so thick it creates a weed barrier because it doesn't allow light to go down to where the weeds would be coming up. And then the wood chips on top are there to create a moisture barrier and they are very efficient if there's too much water they absorb the water and release it when it's needed. And then if it's not enough water they keep it from evaporating by being that surface over the compost.

We have found it to work really well on some things. So our land is very clay, very clay. Oh boy, in the Spring we have this one tiny, tiny, tiny window when we tilled, when we plowed and tilled, we had this one tiny window if we got it where the land was still moist enough but not too wet that you could plow it and till it so that it wouldn't be all cloddy. And lots of years we ended up with clods. And that's not fun to work with for the whole rest of the summer. It's not fun at all. So Back to Eden is a no till process. You lay down that soil base and the wood chips on top and then every year you just keep adding composted stuff on top and more wood chips and you don't ever till. You just let the bugs do their job and you just keep adding organic material. So, it really has worked wonders for our clay soil in giving us a loams soil because all the years we were working it every year we added tons and tons of leaves and organic matter and we go get cow manure and spread it. I mean every year, every year, every year. And in the spring you couldn't even tell we added anything. We just had the hard clay pan bed again. So that was very frustrating for us to add all that stuff but never seeing any improvement in the soil. It was just very frustrating. And the soil was very challenging to work in because it was so much clay. So this really resolved that issue, amazingly. We have some beautiful soil out there now. I'm sure that's how it is in nature too, there are some places that get more organic material loaded in one area than other areas of the garden, so it all differs in the

garden how loams it all is depending on how much organic material has worked its way into the soil.

CG: So going this way, we couldn't do the flood irrigating anymore because it would wash everything out. So then we had to change how we were irrigating again. We've gone through every type of watering system you can think of. So Paul's big thing is it doesn't take as much water when you have the wood chips down because they hold it in. So we did overhead watering to begin with. The challenge with that is when you get corn that's seven feet tall, how do you water over that with overhead watering? And we built sprinkler lines that had tall risers with sprinkler heads on the top that we put where the corn was at to try and water above the corn. Of course all that has its challenges. And then, of course, if you go to overhead watering you have to get hoses around to every part of the garden again because you're running it off the hoses. We have a pump system from the ditch that hooks up to our sprinkler system so the irrigation water runs through our sprinkler system so we have hose bibs out in our garden area that we can have water to on irrigation day. We always tried to sprinkle on irrigation day but it was just hard to get through the whole garden that way, especially when you have to run it for so many hours at a time, you know, you just can't get through the whole garden.

Then, the other problem we ran into with overhead watering is our water comes from Utah Lake and over the years because of the recreation that's done up in Provo canyon and with the reservoirs up there, they only allow so much water to come down into Utah Lake at a time. And so unfortunately Utah Lake will get very low and then it becomes very, very alkaline. So when you're overhead sprinkling with alkaline water it’s burning the leaves on everything. And of course, once you get that problem things just start dying because the leaves can't produce the chlorophyll needed to feed the trees and the plants with. So then we were then having to hand water things and not allow the sprinkler to go on certain areas. It just became a nightmare, you can only imagine, just a nightmare trying to get enough water to plants like watermelon and cucumbers and squashes and they cannot tolerate the alkaline water on them at all. So trying to water all that by hand and overhead sprinkling the other stuff, it's just a nightmare trying to manage the watering.

So then we did some more studying and then we went to drip lines and drip tape that we could run down the garden. But the filter on them is so fine that we couldn't run the irrigation water through it even though we had a large filter on where it comes out of the ditch, there's another small fine filter through the pressurization of the drip tap and it would just fill with algae and wouldn’t work. So the only way we could use the drip tape was if we used the culinary water and we just became very frustrated with it because we just could not get it to emit enough water. It would have to run for so long to get all the way through the garden we just couldn't keep enough water on the corn and the beans and things to have them be successful with the strip tape. And then towards the end of the

season it started rupturing all over the place and there's no way to patch the drip tape. So, that investment lasted one year. We just didn't have success with the garden. So, believe it or not, this last year we went back to flood irrigating. We bought white pipe that had holes in it that would butt up to the big white pipe with the gates to let the water come through. So we're using the big pump to fill the big white pipe and then open the gates and let the water run down in these little white pipes with the little holes in them to irrigate everything.

CG: So we had a beautiful garden this year. Things did wonderfully well because they got more water and we corrected our fertilization, which I'll talk about later. But we definitely came to understand that in spite of what Paul said and in spite of using Back to Eden, our garden was not getting enough water. So, going to irrigating this way provided that water, which was very beneficial. But it also created a couple problems. So now our garden doesn't have the slope on it that it needs to get the water to run the way it needs because of all the stuff we've put on it over the years and all the organic material. And again, when we plant we have to push the wood chips aside so that we're down in that composted material, so you scrape the woodchips aside and you dig down in the composted material and you plant in there. So where you plant ends up being depressed compared to the rest of the garden because the wood chips are removed and it's down in the material. So the nightmare that happens is that when you're irrigating the water wants to run down into those culverts where we planted and we little tiny plants and then you've got all these wood chips floating around and they all end up in those little culverts.

So after your irrigation time we had to go back through with our hands and a little rake and rake all of these wood chips out off of these little plants. Labor, labor, labor intensive. So not only do we have to move all the pipe to get the water to run, and of course we couldn't get it to run the whole one hundred feed, so half way through the garden we put another big white gated pipe so we would only have to get the water to flow half the garden at a time. So, it was just a nightmare. Again, it was a nightmare, a learning nightmare because we have to move all the pipes and we had to go back and buy pipe that didn't have holes in it so we could put it up right up by where the gates were at so that the water would get down further down the row before we lost the water up at the top where it was coming out so forcefully. So it was a huge, huge, huge learning experience to get the water where it needed to be on the plants and of course to begin with when the soil's so dry and everything needs the water it took us nearly six hours to water the garden. Well you can't do that all year long all summer long.

Throughout that process of that summer we got frustrated with the plants getting too much water. When the water just goes into the culverts it's just too much water right on the seed and we had several of our early plants like beets and parsnips and onions just really got washed out. Once the water starts flowing and there were low spots in the garden we can’t control it. It was just going where it was going and we couldn't control it.

And some of those rows just literally got washed out. So we had to replant and we got some to come up and do OK with the second replanting, but it was still just too much water in the rows. And where the corn was at, the places where it was low and it got more water we didn't get as good a corn production as we did on the ends it didn't get as much water. So you can always get too much water. Not enough water, too much water—it goes both ways.

CG: So, as the summer moved on and we're trying to figure this out we decided to go ahead and dig some culvers to let the water run down at least part of the row and then run it into the pipe to get it all the way down the row. So everywhere where the slope was good enough we dug shallow, not really deep culverts, kind of shallow culverts and that helped immensely so that we didn't have to move all the pipe. We didn't choose to buy enough pipe to do the whole garden because it just would have been too much. They come in ten foot lengths I believe, so it takes five to do one half of a row half way down the garden. And we have lots and lots of row. We just couldn't afford to buy enough pipe for all that. So we were moving all the pipe. It was just labor intensive being bent over the whole time you're were watering moving the pipe and seeing that the water gets everywhere. So the areas that we could dig the culverts in and the water basically stayed in that little culvert and made its way down the row became very helpful, very, very helpful. Because then we didn't have to move the pipe in that area and we were more successful in keeping the water there instead of running the water across the garden, just staying in the culvert and watering the things that needed to be watered in that row. And then, again, we used hand hoses to water lots of things like the grapes and the blackberries and all of those types of things when the irrigation was running one of us would be using a hand held hose to water all those things by hand with the irrigation water.

So everything has its challenges. This year we watered differently, got more water and I have been working at just using organic fertilizer because we want to be a sustainable organic garden. But in the past few years with as much wood chips and organic material that's in the soils that binds up the nitrogen, I just could not get enough nitrogen through kelp and fish emulsion, I couldn’t get enough nitrogen on peas and beans to have them be successful. And I mean I fertilized those things four or five times and they stayed yellow and they didn't produce well and it was just frustrating. So last year our son had watched Curtis Stone who was experimenting with the Back to Eden and they used the Mittleider formulation of fertilization on the beans and peas and it worked great. So, this year, we did all the organic stuff, but then I got all the stuff to do the Mittleider formulation of fertilizer and we put up over thirty-seven bags of peas. Between the water and increasing the fertilization we just had a tremendous output. Just tremendous. So, because of that reason we made another conscious decision to quit adding wood chips because we don’t

want to deal the with problem of them floating everywhere. So in order to do that we're just going to have to go to composted material.

CG: So we built a big compost bin just out of pallets and so we put all of our grass clippings and we have a neighbor who has horses, so we do grass clippings and manure and leaves and grass clippings, and things from the yard. So we're trying to learn a little more about compost and compost in a grander style of everything that we can get our hands on. And so what we'd like to do now instead of adding wood chips on the tops as the final barrier we just want to do composted stuff. So that we don't have to deal with all the wood chips and we're hoping that as we get just composted material instead of wood chips on top that we won't have so much nitrogen problem. That the nitrogen will be available in the soil for the plants and we won't have to add so much nitrogen in.

So that's where we're at on the Back to Eden in terms of how it's kind of evolved. No matter how one good one system is working in one place, it just tells you your soil is unique, your environment is unique no matter where you go. It is going to be unique no matter where you go, you're going to have to tweak things and see what works for you in your area and how you have to modify it to be more productive.

So we felt some good resolution this year in getting more water to it and more nitrogen to it. We've got much higher yields. And some things we didn't, we didn't get a higher yield with our squash. Our squash didn't produce anything this year and we did the same thing to it that we did to the green beans and the peas and everything else. But we only got five squash instead of forty-five squash, what we usually get. And I didn't get any pickling cucumbers. It was loaded with blossoms and we have bees and for some reason they just didn't produce into cucumbers.

There's much of gardening that's a mystery to me. Every year it's a mystery. I don't like it very well because I don't know how to go about solving this because it had plenty of water, it had the bees, it had everything it needed to produce and it didn't produce. So, I'm not sure. Sometimes I guess it's just the year. So, anyway, that's where we're headed with the Back to Eden to going to the composting material on top. So this year we had to do some studying to try and learn about composting and how to do it properly so that it will be composted down and read for use next spring when we put it in the garden.

So this was another thing, when we did Back to Eden and we felt like we wanted to go that way we watched and looked really hard and found a big chipper that hooks to the PTO of our tractor that can do three to four inch limbs. And so we have chipped everything that we've had on our property from pruning, people bring us stuff and we've chipped their stuff. Last year we had to cut down five big cotton woods because we're going to do permaculture back there where they were at and orchard and we needed them to come down. People leave tons of stuff here in the spring and we chip, chip, chip, chip,

chip. So that was another thing that we invested in when we went this rout because we wanted to utilize all the waste from our own property that we could. And then last year, this spring, we bought a small chipper/shredder that we can put all the leaves into. So in the past we've put tons of leaves on the garden but they weren't shredded except the ones we mowed off our own lawn. So we felt like they would break down into the soil better if they were shredded versus the whole leaves the blow around more. So we shredded all of our leaves this year and we're hoping that that will make a difference too. That's another direction that we're trying to go and add a resource to us to help us utilize the things we have in nature to put it back into the soil.

CG: So another area of our garden is we have berries and strawberries, raspberries, blackberries. And we have grape vines. Where we had the strawberries we just fought and fought and fought like the dickens to keep the grass out of the strawberries. And so the soil was again so clay. So we decided to do grow boxes for the strawberries and the raspberries. And so we built boxes and we made up one part peat moss, one part compost, and one part vermiculite recipes to go in the boxes. And so we made this all up and had this real nice loams soil. First we put ground cover down to try and keep the crab grass from growing up in there, but after we did that for a few years we realized that wasn't the smart way to go we were going to have it make all the soil good we needed to have those barriers removed. So then we had to dig all the soil out of the boxes and pull out the ground cover barriers so that the soil in the boxes could work into the soil into the ground. So we made that mistake. Also, we have a big garden and so we have a lot of perimeter around the garden. So to try and manage that we put barrier down, fabric and plastic down everywhere and then put wood chips on top of it so we could walk in the area, but hopefully not have to weed that area. What we found was that the weeds came up in between the cloth and everything else. So we still had the morning glory and everything coming up everywhere. But it was harder to pull because we had to fight with the fabric. And also what we found like under the grape vines and stuff, the wood chips and everything break down and we had some beautiful soil on top of the barrier and that soil wasn't getting down into where the plants were at. And so, after several years we decided to pull the barrier everywhere which was a major pain in the rear because we had wood chips and soil on top of all of it. So we had to move it all and rip that barrier up. So there's still some down in a few places, but pretty much that barrier is all removed now and we continue to put wood chips on the perimeter of the garden and heavy amounts of wood chips so that it gives us a place to walk.

So this is one of the benefits of the wood chips that I didn't mention is just that even if you just irrigate you can walk out on your garden because there isn't mud. There's nice dry wood chips and you don't ruin your soil underneath and it really allows accessibility to your garden at all times. Which is really nice, it's really nice to be able to have that and not fight with the mud and breaking down your soil and tracking it out of there. So I

really appreciate that about the wood chips. So we are using large amounts of wood chips around the perimeter of the garden to try and keep the weeds down as much as possible, but again it will again break down and create better soil than what is there right now.

CG: Anyways, back to the boxes. We built the boxes and then we took the black plastic out and then we refilled them and planted. I can't say we've been real successful. I'm not good at grow boxes. I'm just not good at it. They are hard to keep enough moisture on them. They are so challenging to keep enough moisture on them. And with the strawberries, it's hard to keep the soil pH right in them, even when you create the soil with the peat moss and everything I have a hard time with my strawberries wanting to be yellow all the time. Anyway, it's a struggle, it's a struggle. We can keep them cleaner, they're not just clear full of the crab grass and the morning glory, but it's a challenge to keep the moisture content high enough in them and the pH balance proper in them with the proper nutrients.

And same with the raspberries, we just struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle to keep enough water on them that they can maintain the water. And we've put wood chips on top of them, but it just doesn’t even make any difference. But we do know that they are very sensitive to the alkaline water. So if the alkaline water gets on the leaves they're just a done deal. So the alkaline water is a real issue with us that we have to struggle with and how it affects the plant s and how we keep enough water. So we've been hand watering these boxes on irrigation day and just really flooding the boxes, a lot of them get clear full. But still, it's not enough water. So we bought really heavy gaged soaker hoses. David, put in hoses with emitters on them, but again, those things do not let out enough water, they simply do not let out enough water to sufficiently water any of that stuff. That was a waste of money and effort putting all those in. So, this year we're going to try these heavy gauged soaker hoses so that we don't get water on the leaves and see if these heavier gauged ones will emit enough water that they'll do ok. So that’s another experiment there that we're going to try. So that's our experience with the grow boxes has been a challenge and we haven't been super successful at them.

RG: You've mentioned how the garden methods have evolved through many different methods over the years, and you mentioned some of the ways how you've decided to use certain new methods. Could you briefly describe why you choose to go with a new certain method or where you learn about it? How do you get this new information and why do you choose to implement it?

CG: So usually most of the new information comes off the internet. Like networking groups that I'm in have sent it. The person that I learned to eat a plant based diet from sent me a link to Paul on Back to Eden. And so I watched it and really just fell in love with it. So we just wanted to experiment and try it. So that's where most the information comes is through network systems and people sending me links and just watching it and

listening to it and studying it and talking to anybody else who's done it to see how it works and then just trying it.

We're certainly very open to new ideas. We don't feel like we're stuck on one idea is the best way. And that's why when we try something and then we have hiccups with it then we try to modify it to get it so that it's not so labor intensive for us, but still does what it needs to do. So that's how that kind of comes about. And if we get a witness that this is a true principle we don't hesitate to jump in and try it and work at it. This year we bought a caterpillar tunnel which is a hundred foot tube basically to try it to see how it works to extend our growing season with tomatoes and peppers and tender plants. I have my herbs in it also to protect them and keep them all winter long. So we're just experimenting with it this year. We got it too late in the season to save our tomatoes this year, and by the time we got it up and got the tomatoes cleaned out and then I mended the soil and planted something new in it. Things may not grow, but I felt like the seeds weren't that expensive and I might as well try it. Richie was telling us that if we do a tunnel inside a tunnel, so take that one row that I planted and do a small tunnel over it, then that will keep it even warmer. So, we're going to try that, we're going to put another small tunnel over the row that I planted where I planted lettuce, all kinds of different greens, radishes, some broccoli, and some cabbage, just cold weather plants, a few beats to see how they would do. So we're going to tunnel that. We just kind of feel like everything is worth experimenting and if that will extend our season, because we have a hard time getting enough ripe tomatoes before they get frozen. The plants are loaded with tomatoes and then they freeze. So if we can have that extension it would help us. You know your premise that we're not really self-sufficient in our garden. It's not a true saying, because we really aren't, but we thought that this might help give us an extended period where we wouldn't have to go buy those things. So it certainly won't provide all year, but at least a couple months extended on it is worth it.

RG: Do you see yourself as having a specific role in the garden unique to the other people who are involved?

CG: Yeah. I would say I'm an instigator. Hahaha. I'm the push. haha.

Another thing I didn't talk about, all the years growing up the children were home schooled. Gardening was a big part of our life and one way we tried to utilize the gardening was through 4-H to give our kids a venue to show things in the fair and get recognition for their hard work. And so, one of the things we do in 4-H is you document everything, which you should do anyways if you're gardening. But we had a journal that we wrote down the configuration of the garden, what we planted where, when we planted it, when we planted seeds inside the green house.

That was another venture that we did as far as gardening is. Buying a green house, a small green house that we started all of our own plants in, is another learning curve—starting your plants from seed, it's just a lot of work and baby-sitting, you know keeping temperatures right and watering and watering the right way and not too much water. It's just another huge, huge learning curve in doing that. But documenting everything is really, really important and that was just another role that I had was keeping everything documented and then helping the kids get everything ready and presentable for 4-H. I usually buy and order all the seeds, I'm the one who starts all the stuff out in the green house. And always the kids help me do all that. Yeah, I'd probably say my role is the push, the instigator, the one developing a plan and making that happen.

RG: So are there certain divisions of labor, like the kids have one job, dad has one job, you have one job?

CG: No. I wouldn't ever say that. We did do division of labor within our home with certain tasks, but it was never set in stone. If we knew one child wasn't going to be available, that wasn't just that child's job. Everybody else had to cover for whoever wasn't going to be there. And everybody knew that. I mean nobody was trying to take advantage of that, it's just life. Sometimes individuals have different things they're involved in and they can't be available so we have to cover if they're not there. So there were not certain assigned jobs to anybody in the garden, it's just what had to be done. We just assessed what had to be done and prioritized it and then we gave out jobs for whatever needed to be done, assignments for the things that needed to be done. So no, I wouldn't say there's a division of labor.

RG: Ok. You've kind of already talked through this, but what does the work cycle in a year look like? When do you start planting, when do you stop harvesting?

CG: So in January and February we try and get our seeds ordered. And all year long we're thinking about what's going to make the garden work better next year and what different things we need to implement. So, in January and February you're looking at those things, you're ordering seeds. In February he starts pruning the fruit trees. That's a big job. So he tries to get those pruned so that in March he'll be able to spray the dormant spray on them. The fruit trees have to be pruned and the grapes have to be pruned. We do a lot of the pruning on the berries in the fall. So then, March is when the big push really starts, usually around the middle of March we plant early crops: carrots, peas, beans, onions, celery—all those early cool weather crops we plant by the end of March.

And in March is usually when I start planting things in the green house. I don't like them to get too big. I don't like to transplant them from one container into another container in the green house. So I usually start them later than most people start. And when we transplant the tomatoes and peppers into the garden we cover them with milk jugs to

create a mini greenhouse out in the garden and they usually catch up. We're always way behind everybody else because they buy bigger tomatoes plants and they put them out earlier than we do, but I've just found that ours catch up and do what they need to do and then I don't have to hassle with repotting things in the green house.

CG: So we can plant seeds out in the garden about mid-May, but we don't plant any tomatoes and stuff like that until the end of May because there's just too much chance of a frost around here. So this last year what I did I put down a pre-plant fertilizer that Mittlieder suggests and that is just Jepson and borax and Epson salt combination that you put down and mix into the soil. Then we also always buy mycorrhizal. Once I learned about that we use that every year. So I buy fresh mycorrhizal and mix that with our water and everything that we plant the mycorrhizal inoculant goes in with it and creates some fabulous root systems, it's just amazing. So I can't speak highly enough of mycorrhizal and what that does for your plants. And then planting and watering, getting the rows ready, planting, watering, weeding, all of that just comes on in mass once you get planted, the watering takes a lot of time. And then just the cycle of fertilization that has to happen every couple of weeks while the plants are growing. So that's the main thrust all through the summer is watering and weeding and sustaining through fertilization and then you have the harvest.

I think that harvesting, a lot of people who do gardens really get in and plant and they have all that excitement and they work at watering it and then when the harvest comes they're so busy doing other things they don't maximize the harvest. And it's challenging, I know, and that's one reason I always feel strongly that a garden should be in your back yard because once the garden is removed from you from any distance at all you become removed from it. It's just not insight and on your mind. So especially during harvest season it is just critical to have your garden in your backyard because you have to check on it every day. There are different things that are getting ripe all the time and you want to harvest when they're at their peak when you're going to get the best nutrients, the best flavor, the best everything. So harvesting is just a constant awareness and being in your garden and looking at things and checking on things and you just have to be in your garden to make harvest happen to get your peak values out of all the work you've already done. So that's just a real diligent, diligent period of time.

Then in the fall, you know, after harvest winds down you've got everything you have to remove from the garden, which is a lot of work and cleaning everything up. And then that's when we start the process of adding organic material, the shredding. I guess I didn't say this, in the spring also is the time. So we add a lot of organic material in the fall but we have our compost bin clear full to the hilt, we're going to let that compost all winter in the bin and in the spring we're going to put that all out over the garden, this fresh composted stuff. We also have a pile within the caterpillar tunnel of compost, leaves and grass clippings and manure that's been watered down. And we're hoping that as that thing

is composting it will generate heat that will off-set the temperatures within the caterpillar tunnel. Probably the truth of the matter is we should have one at each end of the tunnel and one in the middle if we were going to see a significant rise in temperature. We would probably need like three of them instead of just one in the one end. But for this year and just getting the tunnel of up and experimenting that's what we're going to have for this year. We just put it on top of the soil, we don't till it in because we're a no-till. I mean, tilling happens naturally with the things that you plant, pulling out the corn, digging up the potatoes and the carrots. You get that much working of the soil just by doing those types of things. So we try really hard not to disrupt the microbiome that has been created in the soil with the bugs and all that natural stuff that happens in there. So we work really hard not to disturb that. So this fresh compost that we have will just go on the surface and be there on top to work down into the soil naturally on its own.

CG: In the fall and spring both we do wood chips around the perimeter. We can't haul enough wood chips at one time to do everything. So we just keep working at it and we bought this chipper/shredder the small one hoping we could shred stuff that came out of the house. But what we've found is that machine only really takes dry stuff, it can't manage green stuff, it bogs it down and you basically have to have a giant grinder to do that kind of stuff and we don't have any place for a giant grinder, you know, we can't do that, so we still have to haul a lot of stuff to the dump which I wish we had some way we could compost it. But I feel good that it's going to green waste and they've got a big grinder there that grinds it all up and then we can use the compost that they generate there. So what waste product we do have aren't going being buried, they are going to a green waste recycling place and being recycled into compost and wood chips. So I feel good about that, that it's all contributing even though we can't just do it right here on sight with our own property. If we had bigger animals, if we had goats, if we had pigs, and chickens, we could probably do more of that because we could just toss it to them and they would eat it and poop it. And eventually we hope to maybe do that. But at this point we're not doing animals. So we have to haul that stuff to the dump. So every time we go to the dump we bring back wood chips or compost. If it's compost it goes on the garden and if it's wood chips it goes on the perimeter. And we were lucky enough that a neighbor just cut down a whole bunch of big trees on his property and they chipped up everything that they could chip up and put it into a big dumpster and he brought that dumpster and dumped it on our property so our area between the road and where our garden starts which we call our pallet, because up there we chip on that area, it's our landing to go in and out garden with the truck hauling compost or whatever we have, debris we have, leaves or whatever. But the challenges we find with that strip of area, and it's probably about twenty five to thirty feet wide between the road and where the garden starts is keeping the weeds down without spraying round up.

So we've made a conscious decision not to use Round-up anymore because of the glyphosate and the contamination it is in our food sources and in honey and in everything else. So it's really, really, really challenging to maintain these open area properties with weed control. So he dumped this huge, huge bin of wood chips and we just laid it out thick along that whole stretch of property and I realize it's not a complete sun block, so weeds will grow up through it, but we're really hoping and praying that that will help manage that property better to keep the weeds down by having that real thick layer, it's probably six or seven inches thick of wood chips and branches and everything. So we're hoping that will manage that better. So we go to the dump, we utilize the dump and we utilize the wood chips and compost that they have there to keep putting around our garden. So we do the compost around our trees and in the flower beds. So it takes a lot of compost by the time we do the garden and everything around the house that needs to be done. It takes lots of trips getting that and lots of wood chips to put in between all the walkways of the perimeter of the garden. So we still utilize that a lot.

RG: So switching gears a little bit. As a practicing Mormon, do the teachings of the LDS Church influence or affect how you garden or why you garden in any way?

CG: Maybe the *why* because we're always taught to be self-sufficient. We're taught to develop the skills and abilities that you need to be able to take care of yourself, not just in providing food, but in all ways in managing your money, in taking care of your health. You know, all aspects of your life we're encouraged to develop the skills and abilities that we need to manage our lives. So gardening has always been a priority that way because it has always been encouraged by the Brethren to grow as much as your own food as you can and to preserve it and have those skills. So, yeah, that was definitely a determining factor of why we do a garden.

As far as *how* I don't think it has any bearing, except for just as a member of the Church we're taught to do things that help cultivate the spirit in our life. You know, practices like personal prayer, personal scripture study and family scripture study, and church worship and temple attendance. All those things cultivate the spirit in our life in your ability to listen to the spirit. And we feel like all truth and knowledge comes from God and He knows that we're trying to raise a family up to him who will serve his children and forward his work here on the earth and if we can utilize working the land to help teach our children some of those lessons and provide them with skills that help them manage their own life better, to that end the garden helps us a lot. And I feel like being in tune with the spirit and being directed by the spirit helps us learn to tweak what we do out in the garden so that it will produce better for us. No one likes to do a ton of work and not have a good production. That doesn't give you motivation to keep putting all the effort and work out there if you put all that work you don't get a return through a good production. And I don't feel like God just wants us to be wasting away our time and energy and resources on things that aren't going to be productive. So I feel strongly that

the spirit guides us and it leads us to resources and leads us to knowledge and then if we're in tune we can be receptive of that and have in our mind the way to implement that. There's a lot of ways to garden and I'm not saying one way comes from God or doesn't, I'm not saying that. All I'm saying is that God is interested in our lives and he's willing to share knowledge with us through the spirit and I just feel like for our area the spirit can guide us to the resource that will help us be productive in our garden.

RG: So, do you make the garden and garden decisions a matter of prayer?

CG: Hmm, decisions? I guess I feel like usually when we get exposed to knowledge I get a witness at that time whether it's true or not. Like when I got exposed to Back to Eden and watched it, the spirit just overcame me. I didn't need to pray about that. That happened when I had the experience when I got exposed to it. So no, I didn't pray about it. I just had that experience with the spirit and then knew this is the right thing to do. God is showing us how if we get to a point if we don't have available irrigation water we would still be able to manage our garden. I felt really strongly that was a direction. And yes we found that it needs more water than what we were giving it, but it still did survive on the lesser amount of water. So if we got to a point where there wasn't a lot of water available I feel like this way of gardening would give us a head over everybody else in managing the water resources that we would have.

So, in that sense I feel like the spirit guides us when we get exposed to that knowledge and we don't have to necessarily pray about. But we do pray over the garden all the time in terms of praying that things will grow, praying that if we need more information more knowledge that Heavenly Father would guide us to that and help us to know what we could do better to solve the issues that we were having. We pray that it will be productive. We pray that it will be protected from the frost. That doesn't mean that it always is by any means and that doesn't mean that I don't have enough faith, it just means that it's nature, and nature has its own role in teaching us things. And you have to learn to come to grips with that. You know, we're not dependent on our garden to eat, we have money to go buy. But in years past people were very dependent on their garden. Pioneers were absolutely dependent on their garden. I say I have my Tevia moments where I'm out in the garden just talking to God like, "you get this right? You understand I needed this fruit. You understand I'm not going to get any fruit now. So I have to have faith that you're going to provide other resources or that I had put up enough last year that we'll have enough to get by." I have those kinds of conversations with God a lot when I'm out in the garden. When I'm concerned about if we'll have the resources we'll need for everybody in our families. I do have a lot of conversations with him and we do spend a lot of time in family prayer praying that the garden will be productive of all the efforts we've put into it.

RG: You mentioned an experience with your son Tanner earlier on at the beginning of the interview, are there any other specific kind of god moments or spiritual experiences that took place in the garden that you feel makes it a special place?

CG: A sacred place? Yeah, I'd say the garden is a very sacred place. We've had our grandkids out there working and my nieces and nephews when they've stayed with us. And I have pictures of it. It's just holy. You have these little kids walking down these rows with the peas that are up on the trellis discovering the peas and opening them and eating them and just delighted at the hide and seek of finding peas in the garden. Those are always delights, sacred delights that happen as children discover what God has for them through nature and the joy and anticipation you see in their face when they're out searching for potatoes, when that soil's uncovered and there's all these beautiful things in the ground to pick up and see who can find the biggest one. There's lots of joyous moments. When the kids were young and we were working out in the garden we used to hum music and we had to guess what that person was singing. And there was lots of singing out in the garden while we were working and just times to talk. You know, if you're out there and there's only one other child out there with you there's a lot of time just to talk about things that are important to them and what's happening in their life. And I think being in nature is a very safe place meaning nature in that sense of the garden, you're working the soil, you're down on your hands and knees or however you are working, you're just in a very non-prideful state of being. It's a humbling state of being and you feel more free to discuss things that you might not otherwise when there's noise and lots of other things going on. So it's a very open place for open honest communication. Sharing things you might not otherwise share.

So, yeah, there were a lot of sweet, sweet times working in the garden and the harvest, when we would harvest corn and have to shuck it we'd set up a little TV and we'd watch a funny show while we're shucking all the corn and just talking. Those are sweet memories that we have as a family of those experiences working together, but it being fun and not a drudgery. Some of it is drudgery, but there are times when it was a joyful experience working together. Gardening time is hard working time, sometimes it is miserable because it's extended, it's long, you get tired, it's hard work, but there's always an element of anticipation especially as you see the plants grow and just the beauty of everything as it fills in. It's fun to take pictures, we've always done lots of pictures because of 4-H and just because I like pictures, taking pictures of the garden at different stages, going from the small plants to bigger to all filled, the space is all filled in and beautiful. So, yeah, the garden is a place to share feelings I think.

RG: How does the family garden affect the community or does it in any way? And does the community affect the garden?

CG: I think so, because we make a covenant with God to share everything that we have. So our feeling is that if God will bless this little piece of ground and our efforts that we put into it with a good harvest that the things that are beyond what we can take care of we'll share with other people. And one of the rituals we had with the garden was the little red wagon and it just all summer long goes around the neighborhood hauling extra produce to everyone in the neighborhood that we love and that we can share things with. So the garden is a way that our family can be connected to other people in the neighborhood whether I take it or whether one of the kids took it, everybody is open and receptive to having someone come to your house bringing fresh produce, freshly harvested from the garden that they get to enjoy and it creates lasting bonds over the years, and just the iconic image of a little kid pulling a wagon full of fresh produce that he's sharing with all of his neighbors.

So we have an interesting location for our garden. Our property is a corner lot and so the area where our garden is completely exposed to the road and because of that everybody drives by can see everything that we're doing out in the garden. So when we started making changes everybody stopped to ask, "What are you doing? What's going on here?" Like when we started laying down all that compost, the four inches of compost and we switched to Back to Eden, everyone one was like "What is this? What's going on and what are you putting on your garden?" So all summer long we get people that stop all the time, people that are just driving through the neighborhood for the first time, if we're out there working they'll stop and want to talk and it's definitely for us, because our garden is so exposed to the road and easy for people to come to, it has certainly been a place where people stop and want to come. Just like yesterday. So we're out there working and dad is chopping up leaves and our neighbor Joe Hendrickson comes over and says, "Can I bring all my leaves over here after I mow them?" And Dad's like "Yes, we'd love that." And Joe is kind of a reclusive kind of guy, there isn't a lot of conversation with him and his family, and so for him to want to make that connection and come over and dump and of course when he's here we talk for a few minutes and I show him the green house and we go inside and he says, "This is amazing. You're going to want to come out here all winter and sit in this." And I say, "I know, it may not be quite this warm, but it will be a little piece of heaven when you can't normally get outside you could go out there and play a little bit." Anyway, it was just a way to connect with him that if we hadn't been doing the garden that wouldn't have happened. And just like Ron, it was a way to connect with Ron. He wanted to be able to get rid of those wood chips and we're right next door to him so he didn't have to haul them to the dump and it worked good for us it worked good for him. It was a blessing all the way around. So yeah, I would say our garden is a huge connection with people in our neighborhood.

RG: Besides a dumping place for limbs and leaves, do you get any produce from neighbors who have vegetables or plants that you don't grow?

CG: Yeah, so because the last few years we've had problems with verticillium wilt with our tomatoes, we have another neighbor, Jean Stoffer, who gardens and he had a great tomato harvest. So he allowed me to come over and pick tomatoes a couple different times. Then that supplements and I didn't have to go buy so many because ours didn't produce what we needed to put up. So, yeah, other people, Jim Drury, I've always paid him because his grandkids are doing it to raise money for their mission, but he would allow me to take whatever tomatoes I needed. So yeah, there's a spirit of communion between people who garden and wanting to share their produce with somebody who they know, I think that's one of the hardest things, if you go to all the work to garden and harvest you want people to actually utilize what you give them. So if you know someone is really going to use it you're so happy to share it with them. You know you can't use it all and you don't want it to go to waste, so if you have somebody you know will use it it's a blessing. So yeah, there is that spirit.

RG: Well I guess that's really all the questions I have for now, but as a final thing is there anything you want to share that you feel like you haven't shared yet about the garden as an experience, as a process, the role it's played in the community, in your own personal life?

CG: Well, I guess one thing I didn't talk about was another part of gardening that I've discovered in the last few years is herbal gardening and the uses of herbs in our life and the blessing that they are that God has given them to us. So in the last few years I've been working to establish an herbal garden where I have the different herbs that I need that I can go and harvest and dry and utilize. And I feel like that's just a huge blessing for me personally, though at times there's things that can be stressful to me because gardens are on time tables and any time you create time tables or windows of time that things have to be done in it can create a sense of stress because it has to become a priority in that window of time for it to develop optimally.

So if you have multiple other things going on in your life at that same window of time it can be stressful to get major projects done in a garden because some projects take a lot of time. When we plant it takes a lot of time to plant and when we have to pull everything out. There are some parts of gardening you have to do all at once and it's just time consuming and so it creates a sense of stress. But on the biggest overall part I find a lot peace working in the garden. My characteristic as a person tends to be more high strung and pushy, pushy, push, and driven. And so when I can have time to work in the garden and just be in nature, hear the birds sing, be aware, it helps me be present, be aware of all the things that are happening. Sometimes we get so multi tasked that we have a hard time being present to just what we're dealing with at that moment. And gardening kind of helps me do that, it helps me be aware of the soil, it helps me be aware of the temperature, it helps me be aware of the moisture content, it helps me be aware of my total environment because I know that that's affecting what's growing out there. And I

just think awareness like that helps you be closer to God and your spiritual sense. Gardening gives you perspective. I think it gives you perspective for all of life.

CG: There are a lot of analogies that you can pull from gardening that apply to life. And when you're out in the garden working and looking at things, I guess gardening gives me an opportunity to try and understand things I don't understand. When you're giving a plant everything it needs and it still doesn't respond, you're like, "OK, does this plant have agency or am I missing something here?" So, I guess the garden gives me a contemplative place to think on things of a deeper sense, a deeper connection with God and brings peace to my life and joy to my life. It's very joyful for me to go out there and see great big pea pods that I get to pick and shell. I know it's hard work, but it's joyful to me because it's a miracle. It's a miracle that you plant this seed and it grows into this big bush and produces all of these peas that you get to eat and enjoy and bring health to your body. So I love the connection between what we do with the earth and how it affects our bodies health-wise because of what we're nourishing our bodies with. So I think the garden can nourish my spirit and mind as much as it can nourish my physical body and I'm very grateful for that, I'm grateful for the relationships that have developed in the garden. I could never underscore the value of the relationships that have been deepened and strengthened in the garden. It's just a natural harvest of working together and planting something and following it through the whole process to harvesting it and putting it up together.

I think it developed layers of connections almost like the mycorrhizal does. You know the mycorrhizal goes down and inoculates the soil with little bugs that bring the food and nutrients to the roots so that the roots can develop many hundreds of thousands of little capillary roots that feed the big root. I mean it is such a layering process. And I just kind of feel like the tentacles of that happen in relationships out in the garden. When you're out there, it's like you're relationships are getting all these little capillary tentacles developing instead of just one huge root there's all of these other tentacles that strengthen that big root that strengthen your relationship with that person and strengthen your relationship with God and your relationship with the world and your relationship with the community just like we talked about people coming, that's part of that mycorrhizal affect. Those tentacles reach out and reach the people that are driving by or that are in the community that kind of want to be apart making that garden successful and seeing it be successful.

So I could never underscore that, I could never underscore the principle of work, just hard work and how the garden gives us the opportunity to do that and not to be afraid of it. To raise kids now in the environment they are in to not have any fear of going out and trying something new that they've never done before, and not being handicapped with fear because they don't feel like they'll be successful. One thing about gardening is that you're going to fail. It's guaranteed. You're going to fail some time. But those failures are

good. Like I said, we're not dependent on the food, we could buy other food, so what a safe place to fail. But failure teaches you something. So you don't want this to happen again after you've put all this work into, you don't want this to happen again. So what changes are we going to make so that this doesn't happen again? So that's a big life lesson, in being able to accept failure in your life, that's a maturing point not to expect that perfectionism and that "Well, I've put all this effort in it, it should have done this." Well there's other factors we're missing somehow. Yes, we did put all this effort in, but we're missing something some component that we need to get figured out so that this doesn't happen again. So I think that's another big blessing of having the garden.

CG: Also, we did actually sell some part of our produce—our pumpkins and our squashes—because we generally had so many and it was a way that we allowed the kids to manage that. They made signs that they put out on the road and they managed it when people came and bought it. And that gave them some money that usually what we did with that was put it in a jar and then went and did some fun recreational thing with it. Went to a museum or went and had some fun experience together with it. And this year we had lots of pumpkins so we had our grandkids harvest them and take them to their house with the signs and they sold them in their little community. And they had a connection with the people in their community because of that. And so that's one other venue we didn't talk about, but another way to have the tentacles of the garden reach past our own little lot.

So I think that's probably everything. It is just such a joy, like when it's time to harvest the grapes and they've been hiding underneath all the leaves and you go out and find great big huge clumps of grapes, it's like, "This is amazing and it tastes so good and we'll have so much juice all year long." It's joy.

And another thing that I didn't ever talk about, the reason berries are so important are because of children. And we've always, always have had children. Our own children and neighbor's kids and now our grandchildren come to our yard and play and one of the funnest things in late summer is to go hunting for berries whether it's the strawberries or it's the raspberries or it's the black berries. When a child is old enough to walk and discover they head to the strawberry patch and are looking. They climb right in the strawberry box looking for those little red strawberries and so delighted when they can find it. And so that has been a source of joy to me all the years of doing the garden is having the berries that the children could discover and enjoy while they're out playing outside. They'll jump on the trampoline and play on the swing then they'll run over to the berry patch and pick a couple berries and then they'll go back and play some more and then they'll run to the berry patch. And to me that's fun, that's really, really fun to have something that they can just eat straight off the fine like that and enjoy while they're out playing in the sunshine. So that's one more point.

RG: I know you do a lot of processing of your food, canning and putting things up. Who did you learn how to do that from, or did you teach yourself?

CG: So I learned that from my mom and my grandma, grandma Ewing did it and mom did it. Grandma Wheeler did it. They canned a limited number of things. So I knew how to put up peaches and cherries and stuff like that. Mom never made apple sauce. They did the grape juice. So I learned from people around here how to make certain things. One thing was apple sauce. I went up with Audrey Drury, who is now gone, has passed away. And we spent a day making applesauce together: cooking apples and putting them through the Victoria strainer. Then I took mine home and bottle them, but we did all that together. It was such an interesting day. She was taking care of her mother who had Parkinson's, her mother lived with her, and there were people in and out of that house twenty million times. It was a very disrupted process, but it was very fun to be in her home and do that with her and just to have that exposure to the intimacy of the inside of her home and the goings and comings.

And then there were other neighbors like I wanted to learn how to make chili sauce, and she gave me a recipe and I utilize the extension heavily. There was Utah State University's extension too. I used all the resources they had and recipes they had and consulted with them often time when I had problems and where our garden was in the 4-H contest every year they would come out to judge the garden and so I'd have one or two people and then we could talk and I'd tell them problems we were having and issues we were having and they would give us ideas and information that would help me. So we really, really utilized the extension program a lot in our years of doing things.

So, yeah, learning how to use the pressure cooker, my neighbors helped me that did it. Then you just kind of do it and follow the direction and learn how to do it and be safe. So canning was extended thing too. Over the years I've spent many, many, many hours teaching other people how to can. They'd come to my house to learn how to make salsa or beans or whatever they wanted to do. Lots of time teaching other people how to can and put food up.

And another thing that we've learned in the last few years is fermentation. So without processing the food you just ferment them so that they're still living and have all their enzymes. So that's been another learning curve for me is learning how to do that. But it's been very good for our health and sustaining our health and utilizing extra quantities of food that we're getting from the garden at one time, but keeping it live. So that's another area.

RG: Could you give me a list or inventory of the foods you preserve through canning, fermenting?

CG: So we freeze berries and nuts. And then we freeze corn and peas, and like our berries are raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. When I have a good harvest of nectarines I'll freeze nectarines and some peaches and apricots. We do a lot of freezing because we do green smoothies and so I need frozen fruit for that. So we do a lot of that. Canning, Tomatoes we do whole tomatoes, diced tomatoes, chili sauce, ketchup, and salsa. We put up green beans. I do freezer jams that don't have sugar in them, it's just basically the fruit and chia seeds. So I do process some jams, but where we don't use sugar any more I don't do a lot of jams. We do peaches and apricots and cherries and applesauce. We dry a lot of things. We dry apples, and raisins, I'll make fruit leather from apricots and plums. What else do I have down there? All the grape juice of course, we do lots and lots of grape juice. Pickles, we put up pickles we ferment them and we put up regular pickles. So, we do a lot.

RG: Do you usually have your own honey as well?

CG: Yeah, because we have bees. So have our own raw honey that we have to cook with and utilize.

RG: Do you see a big difference between your summer grocery store budget and your winter grocery store budget? If you had to give a rough percentage of how much food you get out of your garden and how much food you buy what would you say?

CG: Yeah, especially because we eat a lot of greens and tomatoes and cucumbers and peppers. So there is a significant difference, I couldn't tell you exactly how much, but there's a significant difference. And if we didn't have any of our garden produce there'd be a huge difference because we eat everything we put up and we eat fresh from the garden the whole summer. It would be significant. I can't tell you how much. And people who don't want to garden, they always bring up the argument that it's not cost effective and I'd have to agree with them. If you're talking in terms of labor and everything, no, it's not cost effective. But all the other things that we've talked about that you get from a garden, how could you ever put a value on that? You can't. And how can you put a value on food that you know hasn't been sprayed with anything, hasn't been subjected to any kind of change and you're picking it right when it's at its peak of harvest. You never get anything at the store at its peak of harvest because it has to be transported. That mere fact alone, and because it has to be preserved so that it doesn't just deteriorate before it gets to the store, you know they're spraying stuff on it, they're putting stuff on it to maintain that perfect state we like to see when it's sitting there at the grocery store. So I love it that I can go dig a carrot fresh and not even scrub all the dirt off of it but have that microbiome that it's been growing in become a part of me and help my microbiome in my gut. There's something very invaluable about that whole process and for your own health what it does for you for having that. So I guess I couldn't quantifiably put the value of what having your own fresh food does for you compared to buying it.

RG: Great. Thank you for your time for these great insights. Again this has been Ross Garner with Christy Garner at her home in Bluffdale Utah. It's November 4th, 2017. Thank you for your time.

David Garner Interview

(This interview took place November 4th, 2017 in David Garner's home in Bluffdale, Utah).

Ross Garner (RG): Ok, this is Ross Garner with David Garner in his home in Bluffdale, Utah. The day is November 4th, 2017. And this interview is in relation to Ross Garner's thesis project on Mormon agriculture, both welfare farms and family gardens. David, if you could state your full name and your year of birth just for the record.

David Garner (DG): David Worth Garner, 1960.

RG: Great, and if you could give me a brief description of your current family situation.

DG: Current family situation. So, I have been married for thirty-five years this month to Christine Louise Wheeler. And we have had seven children and one of them was deceased at birth but the other six are still alive thankfully. Do you need to know ages?

RG: No, not ages.

DG: So I have Richard Thomas, Makenna Sheree, Anthony Ross, Jacob Worth, Jeffery Karl, and Tanner Weston. You can guess the sex of them by their names. Three are married. I have eight grandchildren. Three younger boys are yet to be married and are engaged in school or work or missions for the LDS Church.

RG: Great. Could you tell me a little bit about your heritage of gardening or farming in your immediate family, but also your dad's family?

DG: Sure. When you introduced the topic of Mormon gardening and such, that's a little bit not my heritage. I mean it is, but it isn't, because my father was the first member of the LDS Church in his family and he had a heritage of farming, that would be farming not gardening, from his father who is my name's sake, Milton Worth Garner.

My dad grew up on a large farm over 120 acres I'd say. He had a bottom forty and then upward there's another forty acres and I think he had 120 acres, but I'm not exactly sure about that. I wish you could interview him. So my dad knew farming, knew it quite well, and then he studied it. He went to school, North Carolina State University and got a degree in agricultural engineering and taught it all his life. But when I came along he was thirty years old and I came into a family, at the time I was the fifth child.

I don't know that we always had a garden because some areas we lived were too small to have a plot of land for farming on gardening on, but he always wanted one. And so when we had an opportunity to move from a neighborhood which was basically wall to wall houses, not much property, to a ten acre plot in Seneca, South Carolina he was ecstatic. At that time I was probably seven or eight years old and at that time we started the

tradition of gardening and planting gardens every year and we would rotate it and move it around, obviously with ten acres you can do quite a bit with. Although part of it was in woods and some of it was covered with Kudzu vines. That was an age old fight to keep the Kudzu out of the garden. It wanted to come in whenever it could. So we always planted beans and corns and tomatoes and peppers and okra. And my mom liked to try exotic things like Brussel sprouts, all the greens like kale and kohlrabi and Swiss chard. I always hated that. She'd always serve it for dinner. But yeah, we had to eat some of it.

So then, when my wife and I were married initially we didn't live in a spot where we could have a garden. We did try and grow tomato plants alongside the house in a little apartment we lived in, just next to the church over there on 14600 South in Bluffdale. But again, the same story as my dad, we had an opportunity to get some land, in this case only one acre, that started our heritage of gardening. We moved into the house when Makenna was born, we started gardening from that time on. So, Ross, you probably didn't know us not to grow a garden when you were growing up.

We started immediately behind the house when there weren't any properties next to us developed and discovered that our garden was on the other side of the property line so we had to move it, but we have still kept that in strawberries and grapes and raspberries. So that is where our original garden was. And we moved it out to the middle of the property and expanded it quite a bit when you had willing hands or not so wiling hands. When you have hands to help you can make a little bit bigger impression on the ground, which we did and have enjoyed produce every year to some degree or another.

We moved to South Carolina for a couple years for my work and I don't remember gardening there. We were renting a place that was a small lot. Not a lot of land so I don't think we did a garden. We made have had plants in pots and things. That's where you were born. We didn't garden there as much.

RG: Besides trying to avoid Swiss chard, do you have an early memory of gardening with your dad? What is your earliest memory?

DG: I remember planting corn. Dad would dig the rows and would always lay the fertilizer in, you'd mix it in. I was there and I don't know, probably wasn't much help when I was a young kid but I do remember he had a little wheeled plow just for digging rows. He had a plow on the end of a wheel with handles like you'd see pulled behind a tractor, but you just pushed it. So he'd open up the ground with that, straight rows. Harold my brother, Harold is a year and a half older than me, he and I had the job of planting the seeds and stepping on them and dad would cover them up. Charles, my oldest brother, would be helpful too; I think he would dig rows too when planting corn and beans. We got a planter just like the one we own now which has a belt driven planting mechanism that picks up the seeds in a little plate that has different sizes for different types of seeds

and drops at a controlled depth that covers it up and suppose to draw it all, and he thought it was so slick, he loved it. We used that quite a bit, but that was when I was a teenager probably.

Back in South Carolina the dirt was red, red, red. Do you remember that red dirt? It needed a lot of nitrogen added to it, it had a lot of phosphorus which is what I think made it red. But having the upbringing and tutelage he had he knew how to grow most anything in that stuff and it would sure make your shoes red, it wouldn't come off. But he worked a lot. He was a professor at Clemson University and he was not home a lot during the day. He'd leave from work early and get home five thirty or six, but we had to work hard on the weekends to get things done.

I forgot to say, my dad was Thomas Harold Garner and my mom was Cetryu Bentley Garden, my mom oversaw the weeding and a lot of the harvesting when it had to happen during the middle week unless it was on a Saturday, Dad wasn't available a lot. But sometimes we get busy when he got home. But planting weeding, watering, we didn't have to water, that was a shock to me when I came out here. People have to water their gardens? But planting and weeding and harvesting and winterizing was kind of a rhythm of life when I was growing up.

RG: So when you began gardening in Utah, did you find a lot of things you learned gardening with your Dad in South Carolina transferred over or did you have to start from scratch and make things up as you went?

DG: No I did things the same way and I still do things the same way as he did them. I always look at the package. He always looked at the package, he always read the directions he was an engineer, right? So, even though he knew how to do everything he would always read, but once you read you still just do it the way you learned it. What's an inch deep? How much is six inches apart? You know, it's just about like this [approximating the length with his hands]. I never saw him get out a tape measure or anything; he just knew from experience how far apart to plant them, except when he was trying to figure out how to fertilize. General fertilizer he always liked to calculate the square footage of properties, and weigh it out and mix it perfectly and broadcast it over a controlled area. He was pretty classical that way. But yeah a lot of the things I learned hold true out here, watering is the biggest thing that's different.

RG: So if you were to describe your role in this family garden you have now what would you say your role is? What kind of jobs do you mainly do?

DG: Soil prep, planting, watering, harvesting. Obviously, you know mom does a lot in the garden when I'm not at home, similarly to my dad. But we share most of the jobs when they need to be done and when we're available we do it like the planting and weeding. This new garden method that we've done is a lot easier on the weeding, so that's

not as taxing, but it still takes a little effort. But the watering is the biggest job that I have. Sometimes I do let mom do it. I don't like her to have to do it.

RG: What does watering entail?

DG: We've got the garden divided into two; it is a ninety by sixty garden. It's a pretty decent sized garden. Actually I think it grew to one hundred feet long this year. Maybe we got ambitious. We expanded it a little bit. So, it's one hundred feet long by sixty and we divided it into two pieces. You know if you flood too much you wash the top cover off, which is what we've tried to establish with our Back to Eden no till garden method. So we don't want to flood too much, but we need a deep watering because that didn't do will with just overhead watering and soaker how watering. So we went back to kind of flooding and it's a big five horsepower trash pump out of the irrigation ditch.

RG: Is that an electric?

DG: No, it's a gas trash pump. It's a Honda. So hook up hoses, we have two gated pipes, ones an eight inch ones a six inch. Gated pipe every thirty inches there's a gate you just get the pump running and open the gates and let it roll. We've had to get some irrigation drainage pipes down each row to keep the water moving without flooding out and washing away too much of the top. We put those little irrigation pipes down each row. And it takes about two and a half hours to flood the garden now. Not bad—maybe three. I irrigate my yard in three hour increments with an electric pump at the same time and so I can generally get all the garden done. There's the peripheral stuff like the fruit trees and the berries and grapes and things that take a little longer.

RG: You've mentioned a pump a seed dispenser planter, are there any other tools or equipment, technology that you've invested in over the years to make gardening easier?

DG: Well, we had a tractor. That used to be quite a big part of the garden because at the beginning of the season and end of the season we always did the soil prep and at the end of the season we'd turn it. We'd put a lot of compost and manure on it and turn it, and at the beginning of the season we'd till it in and have everything ready to plant. But yeah, that was pretty temperamental as far as timing goes, making sure that happened at the right time, because if the soil is too wet or too dry when you do it is less than effective. So that's another big benefit for going Back to Eden and doing the no till garden. So that tractor is not as much use anymore, it is basically a wood chipper. And we do have a nice wood chipper we can take care of any dead fall from the trees that we have around here and the trimmings of pruning. So that chipper on the back of the tractor is one nice thing and shovels and hose and rakes, and pitch forks are at the other end of it. Yeah, that's probably it. Also, a truck and a trailer for hauling the wood chips and compost around. It is kind of low impact farming I guess.

RG: I know you have bees, a couple beehives. Is there a reason you decided to get bees and what kind of a process is that work?

DG: I don't think we've had difficulty with things germinating. There have been a few things here and there that didn't germinate well or didn't pollinate well I guess I should say, but we like honey. It is a nice easy way to get your own honey and bees do most the work and I do the rest. I like it when I don't get stung. It's fun. When I do get stung it brings me down to reality, but luckily I'm not allergic. They are mostly for supplying honey. Pollination is a great thing too. I think our garden and fruit trees do well. They love the corn, when the tassels are out you can just hear them in the corn when it starts getting warmer in the morning. They just go crazy in the corn. And they're dancing in and out of the yellow blossoms on the squash all the time. I love to see it when you're out watering in the middle of the day you can see bees all over the place. That's a good thing. I just like to watch them work and know they're doing good things for me. A lot of people have a fear of bees in general; wasps and hornets, but I see them as beneficial pollinators. So, unless they get mad at me I don't get mad at them and don't lose any sleep with them nearby.

RG: I was wondering if you could give as detailed an inventory as you can of the crops or plants you plant on a yearly basis or harvest from on a yearly basis.

DG: Sure. So the first thing we usually go for is carrots, onions, radishes, parsnips. Potatoes are a little later because if they come up they get frosted pretty bad. Also, broccoli, cabbage. That's in the big garden and in the small boxes we do lettuce and spinach and arugula, multiple kinds of lettuce. We also go with asparagus, which is a perennial that comes back every year. We're always glad when that starts coming in. And potatoes, we usually have four or five rows of potatoes. And then tomatoes and peppers, all sorts of peppers, bell peppers, hot peppers Anaheim, you know, salsa making stuff. And eggplant; we started trying that three or four years ago and liked it.

Did mom tell you what happened this year? So we started all of these in the green house and when they're young egg plants look a lot like tomatoes so we had a bunch of tomatoes and a few egg plants ready to start and we planted what we thought were tomatoes and egg plants and gave Richie and Rachel some and they got all the eggplant. We didn't get any. So we were out this year and they got some. Some of them didn't make it.

So eggplant, I said onion, corn, and melons, and beans, green beans. We always grow blue lake bush beans—that's the kind we get because that's the kind my dad got. That's the type you helped plant. We've never grown pole beans even though some people swear by them. And then a couple years back we got a few seeds of the winter beans, the type you let go until they get dry and hard and they're like baked beans and such. We really

enjoyed them they were really good. We should probably plant more of them. We usually plant one row or two rows of them. It doesn't do enough to do more than a couple of meals. And the melons and the squash and the pumpkins. Two plantings of corns two or three weeks apart. That keeps us harvesting corn for probably a month and a half at the end of the season. Did I get them all?

RG: What kind of fruit trees do you have?

DG: So we have Fuji apple, Johnny gold apple, a delicious—I'm not sure what kind golden or red—it never has born so we might have to prune it at the root next year if it doesn't ever come out. It doesn't ever blossom. So I have four apple trees. I have two Bartlett pears, one Anjou pear, and one oriental pear. So I have four pear trees. They did pretty good this year. We got three peach trees and a nectarine tree. We lost our nice nectarine tree two years ago basically so I got another one planted. It's not had any blossoms on it yet. It will need a year or two more. And we have a plum tree and a cherry tree, big old cherry tree. It gets aphids every year. I'm going to have to try and bring some ladybugs out to quell my aphid problem. And then a pluot tree, this little tree over here by where the truck gets parked is kind of a sad looking tree, but it sure does bear nice tasty pluots. And I think that's it. Yeah, that's it.

RG: Do you mainly take care of the trees, or does mom help with the trees as well?

DG: No that's me. She helps harvest sometimes what she can reach.

RG: And, how'd you learn to prune and care for trees?

DG: My mom, way back in the day, learned from county extension office. She had a guy come out to our house to teach her and me, I don't know if anyone else was there when he came or something. Anyway, I was there and he taught us a little bit how to prune trees and I've read a little bit about it. Some trees are supposed to be pruned differently than others. Some trees like the open light, like peaches and nectarines like open centers, and apples like a center not open. So I've studied it and read what I could and just do it. I should probably prune a little more.

RG: In relation to this, with the evolution of your garden, where do you tend to get your information for new methods and ideas?

DG: I'm lazy and I kind of get set in my ways. Usually Christy does the studying, to be honest with you. So she researches things and I'm the brute force.

RG: Do you know where she gets her information?

DG: Hopefully, you asked her the question. Did you ask her the question?

RG: Yes.

DG: Utah State University has an extension where there's lots of stuff and I think we're on a email notification for the bugs and the pesticide spraying thing. It prompts you when it's time to spray. And then there's just the internet. You find books about things.

RG: Great. So as a practicing Mormon in the LDS Church, does the Church's teachings (religious teachings) influence how or why you garden to any extent?

DG: Well, I think my dad's conversion to the Church was hard for him, but this is something that made it easier. You know, truth is truth. Mormons aren't the only people who garden, but when you hear it over the pulpit and you make covenants to follow and obey and be good and be adherent to those who are charged to give the warning voice by the Lord who you put a lot of stock in. And it makes you feel good because you're already doing it. We were doing it already when I was a kid before I remember hearing it over the pulpit in conference or anything. So my dad was very much in favor of making sure we heard it, because it was substantiating what he wanted us to do. It just makes sense, really, doesn't it? To be connected with your property and make the most of it? I think it's caught on. I mean, a lot of other people have seen the Mormon model and have tried to follow the same pattern.

RG: You mentioned hearing it in conference, were there any specific words or ideas or principles taught over the pulpit that you specifically remember as a motive for gardening?

DG: Yeah, so I was born in 1960 and you may not remember everything you hear in conference until you're more impressionable. And Spencer W. Kimball was a strong advocate of every family having a garden. That's what I remember him saying, "Every family should have a garden." I didn't see it happening everywhere, but ours did. However large or small, that's what I heard over the pulpit, every family should plant a garden and work together, be self-reliant, do what you could to provide for yourself. I just remember mostly president Kimball talking about it.

RG: I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about how you see the garden affecting your neighborhood and how the neighborhood in turn, if at all, affects the garden?

DG: Well, we have excess. We don't eat all that we grow and we don't like to see it wasted. So we know people who like to use what we have excess. So we had a wagon and the kids would take the wagon around with zucchini and with whatever. I like to think our garden is a positive influence on our neighborhood. Everyone who drives by say they love to look at it. And recently we've had a lot of people help us gathering compost or gathering organic material for the covering of the garden. Just yesterday we had a new contributor, Joe Hendrickson. He stopped by and asked, "Do you want my mulched leaves? Instead of taking them to the dump can I just drop them over at your place?" And we said, "Yeah, that's a good thing—mutually beneficial." We do get the

occasional people who drop off their limbs and things that aren't really suitable for chipping, which makes us have to go to the dump more sometimes. Most the time people ask if we can use this and they bring by whatever they don't want to haul to the dump and say, "If you can use it it's yours." And we use a lot of it from the neighborhood. The chipper gives us a lot of options there. So we can take a lot of people's wood and chip it up and use it. And then Arlene Parry every year calls and asks, "Do you want my leaves?" And I probably picked eight, nine, or ten bags of leaves over there.

And one thing I didn't mention is that we bought a shredder this year, so it can help us mulch up people's leaves quicker. When they don't mow them up and just rake them, we run them through the shredder. In the spring when you're trying to plant and you have a mat of un-mulched leaves on top it is kind of hard on your shoulders getting through those. So we're trying to run them through the shredder now. So that's another piece of equipment we got just last year.

RG: In the neighborhood are there many other people who garden?

DG: Not to the same scale, but yeah there are quite a few. I don't know if you've been to Flora Lyn Crump's place, but she grows a nice big garden when Sam was around, They'd grow a big garden. He's deceased. Delynn, and Terri [Summers] grow a garden. I think the Pedersons grow a small garden. More like tomato plants and peppers and things that they'd like to use. But yeah, there are people in the neighborhood who grow garden, but a lot of people don't. Chuck and Laura do a little bit off to the side there, my brother.

RG: Besides bring leaves or wood chips over, have people in the community ever helped in the garden or helped out with garden projects?

DG: I'm trying to think of the one event I was trying to think of this morning. It's mostly a family affair. Mostly just our family that I can remember. When I cut those trees down in the back getting ready for our expanding and taking over that property in the back. Ivan, our back door neighbor was very helpful.

RG: As far as family time in the garden, do you have a most memorable or best experiences or memories in the garden working with your family? And on the flip side do you have worst memories working in the garden with family?

DG: The best is when we plant. It's all like, "We're going to get this done" and we go out and it gets done. And it's so rewarding to get to see the rows all prepared and everything planted. When there's all of us working, it really helps and makes it go so much faster. So after planting, watering, it’s never convenient. But when you have to make the world stop to do something that's got to happen when it has to happen, you just kind of leave the cares of the world and just do it, right. And when I'm working with somebody, I used to have one or two of you boys helping, and that was just kind of a time when we just

worked together without any other distractions. And that was fun, I enjoy that. It's peaceful time, especially in the middle of the night right. Nothing going on, just water running. You know we kind of communicate with jerks of your head or quick verbals and move down the rows. You get what you have to do done.

And then hard times? I hate getting stressed when mom has to do too much work and I'm not available to help. So that's always a little bit of a stress to me when there's things to do in the garden and I have demands, and I can't do them and it's left to her to do and that makes me unhappy because she's unhappy. So that's always a little bit of a stress inducer. I don't like that much.

RG: Have you ever felt like the garden is a spiritual way in any kind of way? Have you had spiritual experiences while being in the garden, working in the garden? Or is it kind of a neutral place?

DG: The garden is a microcosm of life. There's so much that is representative of God's plan for us. It happens every year. It's a normal cycle. And the growing season is so much like our lives where the roots and the nutrients and the choices that trees make to put out branches that need to be pruned, peas growing on vines, if you find one pea that's ripe you'll find another one off the same vine that's ripe too. So you should keep looking. So many parallels to the way the Lord works in life with us. It's always a spiritual place, it's always that way. I think all the plants have spirits themselves and they have a purpose in life and they're fulfilling their purpose and they just need a little help at it. And so, being stewards over this part of the world, it's rewarding and it brings not only temporal rewards but it's satisfying to my soul that I wouldn't miss having a garden ever. It's good to see a cycle of life starting every year and ending every year. It's just nice. I enjoy it.

RG: I know they're kind of two different worlds, but if you look at your professional work and the work in the garden, do you view them differently?

DG: Yeah, I kind of have to. Professional work, there's so many relationships that are beyond my control that I don't have much influence over. So a lot of times I'm reacting to those influences I can't control. And in the garden, sure there are the forces of nature that you don't have control over, but you can't be bitter about it. It just happens. And you just take what you get and you don't throw a fit, like they say. But when you're dealing with people at all levels, I work with customers and I have to report when people do bone-headed things and have problems. So it's not as fun as gardening. Not as rewarding as gardening. But, I don't know, is that what you're after.

RG: That's fine. So, I'm wondering how just the fact that you have a good job, and you don't need to garden, why do you garden? I'm just trying to understand that a little more?

DG: Yeah, I garden because I like the fresh fruits, the fresh vegetables, I like working in the ground. So put those three things together, you have to do it. And I mean, what would I do with an acre of land if I didn't garden? What would I do with it? It would just be a mess. There's got to be a purpose for it, there's got to be something. Otherwise, you just go live in a town house somewhere, right? And I don't want to do that. You got to get your hands dirty somewhere.

RG: So just kind of a last wrap up question, is there anything about gardening these last couple decades, about why you garden, how you garden, is there anything left that you haven't said, that you'd like to say?

DG: I don't know, I think working together as a family in something that everybody can see immediately rewards from is fulfilling and also helps perpetuate the same connection to the ground that I grew up with and I think it's important. And I hope my kids will follow the tradition if they are in a position to do so. I loved working in the garden even though my mom would probably site a few examples of my groaning for not wanting to weed. I loved the taste of peas out of the shell and tomato sandwiches and corn on the cob, green beans with fatback, young corn mixed in it.

RG: Did your mom motivate you anyway? And did you motivate your kids in specific ways to help them get out and garden?

DG: Mom had to do a little yelling. Cause we were sometimes less than willing. Yeah, she had to do a little yelling but she didn't ever have to resort to corporal punishment. She may have had a little branch or something she'd whup us with like a willow. But I don't remember my mom doing anything like that. She would raise her voice when we were not up and willing and going. She tried to motivate us with positive things: “We’ll do this if we can get this done." She'd cut it into pieces. I grew up in a family of seven so there were enough of us to get things done. And we had a pretty big garden too back in the day. Probably close to the size of this one if not bigger. But we generally just expected it from our kids, just expecting it and you know persuasion takes a lot of forms. You just have to do what you have to do and tried not to be too draconian, but the kids were pretty responsive. So we didn't have to. They were usually pretty willing to help if we set the stage and said, "It's time to plant" "Let's go weed." But you guys were all pretty good to help. What else was I going to say? Working alongside one another is about the best thing you can do. I'm not the most talkative person, even when I'm working, so it's hard. But building relationships is a big important part to working together in a garden. When you work together for a common purpose it knits you together. That's probably the biggest reason for gardening, besides all the fresh produce and things.

RG: Great. Thank you. So, this has been Ross Garner with David Garner in his home in Bluffdale, Utah and it's November 4th 2017 and thanks for your time.

DG: You’re welcome.

Richard Garner Interview

(This interview took place on November 4th, 2017 in Richard Garner's home in Riverton, Utah).

Ross Garner (RG): Alright, this is Ross Garner with Richie Garner in his home in Riverton, Utah. Today is November 4th, 2017. And this interview is in relation to Ross Garner's thesis project on Mormon agriculture, both welfare farms and family gardens. So Richie, could you just first state your full name and just your year of birth.

Richard Garner (RTG): Richard Thomas Garner. July 2nd, 1985.

RG: Ok. And could you just give a little bit of background information about your family, both your immediate family now and the family you come from.

RTG: Ok, well, growing up I was the oldest of six kids growing up in Bluffdale, UT before it was big and all industrial and all that stuff. I remember having a country road come to our house, it was all gravel. Just playing outside and having fun. No fences, we could just run around and have a great time. I loved that. We always had a garden out back. And we always were working in it, whether it was to punish us or correct us or not there was always family time spent out in the garden. And it got bigger and bigger and bigger. As I recall we took on different projects and tried to do things differently.

Now, my wife, we've been married for ten years. She didn't grow up with a garden, but I knew that would be a big part about what we would do to raise our family. We found some land. We got married in Rexburg Idaho, and we had Miles our first kid. We have four kids now. And just looking for opportunities to give Miles the same experience I had, so we found some land, me and a neighbor, and we worked together on it and just always tried to have a garden ever since. Now I have four kids and we're living in the city on a quarter acre there's not a lot of opportunities for that so we're always looking for ways to teach them principles and help them be moral people and hard-working people, contributing people whether it's on our land or not.

RG: Great. You mention some early memories for being punished or just put to work. What's your earliest vivid memory of gardening if you have one?

RTG: Yeah, I'm not good on that. But I remember we'd get bored out in the garden, we'd get off task if there weren't people just watching us. And just throwing dirt clods or having rotten tomato wars, which usually just started with me just throwing rotten tomatoes at everybody. I remember watering the lawn with dad with the fire hose all over the place. That took a lot of time. I remember just the green foliage in early summer when everything is getting mature and it's just beautiful walking through the garden.

Those are probably my favorite memories. Shucking corn, and playing name that tune, and just being together. Yeah.

RG: Do you have least favorite memories? Did you have a job you hated?

RTG: Growing up I didn't like throwing manure over everything. That wasn't fun. Weeding is always awful, you can never get the whole root out. It took forever, you were always doing it. Yeah, I'd say those were my least favorite. And I didn't ever like being out in the flower garden. That was Mom's thing, she wanted that, then I had to go do it all for her. I didn't like that. I'd much rather be out in the vegetable garden.

RG: Gotch ya. Were there any jobs that, being the oldest, you did that the younger kids didn't do?

RTG: Rototilling. I remember getting started on the rototiller and feeling like that was awesome. I remember one time, I was the only one at home for some reason, everybody left, so I got out the rototiller, I knew that the corn the beans and some other stuff needed to go in. So I got the rototiller out and tilled a whole bunch and laid out the rows just like Dad did and got it all planted. But when they got home I'd planted the wrong stuff in the wrong place. And they were like, "Well, that's great Rich, but we're going to tear all that out." And I was just really ticked off. I remember that. Digging potatoes—that was something I had to do for a long time before everyone else got some weight on them, to dig down deep enough to get the potatoes out. Splitting wood for a long time was mostly me and dad as I recall. I don't know. There's some jobs.

RG: Great. I'm wondering about your family now with your kids. What kind of jobs do you give them to do and is it for the same reason as you were given jobs or do you use it as a form of discipline for your kids, punishment sometimes, or is it kind of a family activity you just do together in a loving way?

RTG: There's not quite as much of it to do. We put in methods that cut down on weeds and stuff. Today we just went out, we were prepping some beds for next spring. We did a deep dig with a six inch digging fork. And then we brought in a good six inches of compost from my compost pile. And it’s fun, it's like a history lesson, we were digging through, we found where one of our chickens died, and he was in there, and I just butchered a whole bunch of rabbits and their remains are out there. And we found those and they were stinking. So the kids were in charge of raking it across the screen that I built to kind of screen out the big pieces. And they had to move the leaves back. Miles was able to dig deep and get a good deep dig on that. And I'd dump it out and they'd rake it out and I'd have to fix it up a little bit and they brought the leaves back over to cover it over winter. And I'd say the biggest reason I have them work with me is so that they just learn how to work. It’s just what I want them to do, I want them to know how to do that. My dream would be that they find the love of it, but if they don't they're going to know

how to work and do things and feel confident in themselves. I take my older two, Gwen and Miles, out to a local farm and it's fun watching them there because they are empowered, they know how to do the chores, and they're big people chores and they do them and they take joy from it and it's really fun to watch. I feel like it gives them confidence and teaches them how to work, help them feel like they could sustain themselves and makes them feel at peace, I think, because they know how to do it. And very rarely is it a form of discipline now. Very rarely.

RG: Besides the things you learned from growing up gardening, how have you learned to garden the way you garden? What informs your garden practices?

RTG: I'm very interested in market gardening. I want to make money doing it. As it is right now, I'll always have to have a side job, so I'd rather have a job that I want to do and that I take joy from. So I'm very interested in market gardening so that it's very dense, very dense planting, a lot like how they do in Cuba. No petroleum inputs, I'd rather not have a tractor, or maybe a walk behind tractor. Mostly hand tools, and no petroleum based fertilizers or anything like that. They're just out. And I've been informed by people like Joel Salatin, Eliot Coleman, Curtis Stone, and Jean-Martin Fortier. And there's another guy named Richard Perkins, he's over in Sweden doing cool stuff. And I just think it's better, they're healing the ground, it's sustainable, they don't have any chemical inputs, and they double their organic inputs. I love how Joel, he always says, "There is no place else, it's all here. It comes from here and it stays here. We don't ship it out, whereas the major industries they're shipping in feed they're shipping out manure, they're shipping their cut up to go somewhere else to be butchered and all that." And as far as greens and vegetables they're all grown in like California and are shipped all over the place. And I just like the idea that it's all right here and I like that. So think those have been the most influential so far.

RG: And you were introduced to those through personal research and the internet? Or how do you find out about those?

RTG: Yeah, just personal research and one references the other and it just goes from there. And really, it's always just been a hobby, but as far as making it real it goes back to a Super Bowl commercial, haha. The Dodge Ram super bowl commercial, haha, where Paul Harvey says, "So God made a farmer." That was the first time I was introduced to that. And just as I thought about people I knew who were farmers I just felt like it was a calling and just a noble pursuit to spend your life to help heal the earth, heal your body and help other people do the same thing. It's noble and it's what I'd love to do.

RG: Great. So you mentioned some aspects of how you garden, how you have a no till that cuts down on weeds. Could you just describe your garden place out here on your own property and what you've done to it?

RTG: Yeah, we have some berries growing along the fence lines. We live on a quarter acre and the house takes up most of that. So you kind of got to get creative in how you pack things in. We have a compost machine going where we have rabbits and chickens starting it out, and we have a wood chip or saw dust base that they excrement and urine on, and that's our base, our start. And we just have a compost pile. So berries along the fence line and we got a couple fruit trees. And we got a corner of my property fenced off. We started with a Paul Gautschi Back to Eden method where we put down newspaper on lawn, it was a lawn before we came in, and we covered that with about six inches of compost and we covered that with another six inches of wood chips. And that was five years ago and that's just getting better and better and better. I've found this year for the first time it's starting to compact, so I bought in the idea of a deep dig with permanent beds to try and maintain some areas where we just don't walk on. We're trying to tarp both the organic material and wood chips, with just tarps to try and keep the soil there that is there. Yeah, no chemical fertilizers. All the compost comes from our place, or so far it has this year. Which has been really fun, I like that, that process. It takes a long time, I'm going to have to figure out how to cut down on the time. But it's fun just to have it all come from here.

RG: What kind of crops do you raise?

RTG: Peas and beans, and not enough to put up or anything. I think it'd be better to use Mom and Dad's place for like what we eat and I'd use mine for a kind of market garden type of a feel. So I'm going to start practicing that and getting my timings and my plantings right so I have consistent produce coming off the field and know what inputs I need to bring in and that kind of stuff. So I'm thinking about that. We always have a salsa garden, so there's always peppers, onions, tomatoes, and whatever else mom has cooking up in the greenhouse, and we put it in.

RG: Ok. What would you say is the hardest or trickiest aspect of gardening?

RTG: Just the time. That's why I'd like to be able to make money from it, because all my time is spent making money I don't have enough time to do that. So that's probably the trickiest part. And just getting your plantings right and knowing what you want. I don't know, I don't feel like I can ever spend enough time to master it because I'm never out there enough because I'm always doing other things. So if I could spend more time, I think it would eliminate a lot of the tricky things about gardening.

RG: Ok. As a practicing Mormon and member of the LDS Church, in what ways if any have Church teachings religious ideas influenced your desire to garden and how you garden? Or has it at all?

RTG: Well there's a huge idea of self-sufficiency and hard work in the Church. Brigham Young's whole thing, it's better man dig a ditch and fill it in again than to sit idle. I think

there's a lot to that. So I've always liked these visceral experiences with life and death. We took on animals this year to our farm/garden whatever, and I think it just teaches a lot of good things in there, that life is precious, and that it's all here for us. I love this idea of being stewards. There's lots of parables in the New Testament of gardening and in the Book of Mormon even studying Jacob 5, there's the whole allegory of the olive tree and the vineyard and that whole thing. And there's just tons of lessons to be learned out in the garden about God and who he is and his character. But mostly, it's self-sufficiency and hard work and just this partnership with God in creating and helping things and stewarding the ground, healing the ground, and making food as God would make it. I mean Joel Salatin says, "You respect the chickeness of the chicken and the tomatoness of the tomato" and I like. You know, eventually we're going to become God and learn how to make these things on the very smallest point, I might as well get a jump on it and start learning how it all works together so I can prepare for when I create. So, there's a lot there. I don't know how to make sense of all that.

RG: Besides, Brigham Young and people like Joel Salatin who are Christian based, are there any kind of religious figures that have influenced those ideas of yours?

RTG: Well, for some reasons, you have Ezra Taft Benson who was in agriculture and the government. His whole idea about getting big and getting going I don't really agree with. I think it kind of destroys things, I think it's kind of narrow minded. But President Benson is big on all that kind of stuff. Yeah, you've got some parables from Hugh B. Brown that I like that he talked about gardening. But really, besides that, I think that's about it. The New Testament like I said was clear full of examples of gardeners and farmers.

RG: Great. What role does your garden and the family garden and Mom and Dad's place, how have you seen that affect the local neighborhood and community? Has there ever been any overlap? What ways does it affect the local community?

RTG: Well my garden, I don't know if it does a whole lot because it's kind of small. I want to start a composting program where I take buckets to my neighbors and have them give them my scraps, both to cut down on my animal feed and to get people aware of what's going on and what I'm trying to do. I think it's just work and time. And when we did chickens out of our garage that obviously sparked interest and people were like, "What the heck are you doing over here." I had 150 chickens in my garage scratching the ground. And they'd come over and see what's going on. I don't know if it affected other people, I don't know if they lived their lives differently, at least I was living out the principles that I know are true and showing other people the benefit of it. Mom and dad's is just a pretty place and it's really open and lots of people drive past and they're always taking excess produce around. I remember loading up the wagon and taking whatever was coming off the field around to everybody and just the joy that brought others. And

now Mom is doing all kinds of stuff with her teaching about how we were brought up and about herbs and stuff.

RG: Do you see the local community affecting the garden in any way? Besides trying to get them to contribute to your compost pile?

RTG: The only thing here is that they're keeping me from doing what I'd like to do. I'd love to put my front lawn in garden too. It's south facing, that would be the best place to plant. But my neighbors are like, "If you ever plant corn in your front lawn, we'll have problems." Haha. So I have my little lawn, but yeah, we go around and collect leaves from people usually to get some organics as a cover over the fall and winter. And since we started doing chickens we have a lot of excess eggs and we take those around. That's mostly just to help people feel good about the whole chicken thing, because we're not supposed to have any chickens, haha. But yeah, I'd say the biggest things that my community right now to my gardening is holding me back.

RG: Gotch ya. Growing up do you remember any instances where, besides carting around extra produce to neighbors, where friends or neighbors would come help in the garden in any way?

RTG: No. I knew how to do all those things so I'd usually get my chores done first and then I'd go help other people do their chores so they could come and play. That's what I remember. But I don't remember any people coming and helping. But that's just my vision.

RG: Ok. So, do you have any kind of technology or tools? What are your go to tools for gardening?

RTG: Right now it's really, really basic. I have a five inch pitch fork, a digging for to get the deep dig, and then I have a rake, a lawn rake and use that for bed prep. And I have things to trip trees and stuff like that, I have a wheelbarrow to haul manure. I'm going to start doing microgreens, I'm going to build the shelving today. I have all the wood I just got to build it. We're going to do micro-sprouts, so we're going to do peas and sunflowers and hopefully some other brassicas like radishes and other sorts of things. I'm hoping to sell that just to Shane at Utah Natural Meats. And things that I'd love to get on my list, I want to get a big huge broad fork that has about twelve inch tines on them to get really deep dig and it's a lot more ergonomic. And I want to get a greens cut harvester that's from farmer friend, it has a bunch of ropes and it forces the lettuce greens over a reciprocating blade and it cuts them and puts them in a bed, I want that really bad. And I want a Jang seeder for direct planting and I want a paper pot planter that has a chain of paper pots that all go together, so you start them in the green house like that, and then you put them on this tool that has wheels on it and you start the first one and it just pulls off the paper pots and puts them right in the ground and you can get a whole bed transplanted

in like ten minutes. So that's really exciting I love that tool and that idea. A PCS walk behind tractor would be sweet, but that's expensive. Once I am starting to get a lot and am selling to other people I'll need a walk in cooler and stuff like that, but that's all just pipe dreams. But it's coming, it's coming.

RG: Great. So as far as making decisions go about the garden, is this your baby or is this something you and your wife and family work together on and make decisions on?

RTG: It's a good question. I think you should interview Rachel and ask the same question. Haha. I feel like it's mostly my baby. Rach loves the principles, she loves the food, she loves me working with the kids and getting them out of her hair. She loves all that. But I don't know if she has the fire in the bones for waking up at five to get some work done and working in the field all day and the cleaning and the processing. So I don't know all that. She's definitely not as passionate about it as I am. But she's not against it in any way, she's supper supportive.

RG: You talked generally about how your kids feel good about the work they do when you go volunteer at the farm and here as well. How do you work with their attitudes, do they generally have positive attitudes toward gardening or is it ever less positive?

RTG: When it's all of them it's awful. When it's all of them they feel like it's not fair and they don't have a job or whatever. When it's one on one it's amazing. They work hard, I can tell them to do a job and leave and come back and they're still working on it. They work long and hard and they stay focused. They know that there's a job and they're going to stick to it until it gets done. So it's interesting that way. It's very interesting. It's been rewarding. I've been taking one kid with my out to Shane’s every Saturday and that is just super rewarding. They do such a good job. Whether we're doing the fodder machine or feeding animals, they love to ride King, the big draft horse, as we go feed everybody. We could be filling up the seed bin, they'll work right along. And that's hard work, it's heavy, and they just go for it. Or we're in there with the stinky turkeys and they're right in there. Or we're labeling milk and they know what their job is and their good and proficient. Yeah, one on one, they're fantastic. I bet you even I took Miles and Gwen, they would do pretty good, but once it's all three of them, soon it will be all four of them, I don't know.

RG: Before, when you were living up in Rexburg, ID and had a little garden space, and now where you're thinking more market garden oriented, did you approach gardening differently when it was just for your family as opposed, "Ok, how could I make money on this?"

RTG: Yeah, I approached it differently. It was just a hobby then, whatever came up came up. Now I want to get yields and I want to know how things work, I want to find processes to make it efficient and stream line it, and cut out waste. It would be nice to find quick ways to deal with weeds, whether it's tarping and burning off the weeds that

germinate, and making a stale seed bed, and putting some sort of barrier down after you mend the soil and all that. Yeah, I'm very different, very different.

RG: Gotch ya. Cool. Besides your neighbors, what are other natural constraints or issues that you have to deal with when gardening? Do you have bug problems, do you have water issues?

RTG: Here's we're pretty good on water, we get secondary water brought in and I overhead. I think that might harm the greens, at least mom thinks it does. But water is pretty readily available. And the Back to Eden uses the water fairly efficiently. Land, I'm kind of stuck on my property. But if I ever got serious about it here I could easily ask some neighbors to use some of their space. It's a Curtis Stone model. He rents his neighbor's property and grows on it with an understanding with how it will work out when either one of them is done. So yeah, I don't feel constrained that way all I just feel constrained by my time mostly, as far as that goes. Yeah, I think that's about it.

RG: Gotch ya. Alright. As a kind of final wrap up question, are there any motives or methods, your ideas behind farming, is there anything you want to say that you haven't said about why you farm and how?

RTG: I think there's a lot of negative stuff happening on in the world that I don't have very much control over. But I have control over healing my land, I have control over healing my body, healing my family, and I think that could easily spill over into the community as they get to know what I'm doing and the why I am doing it. And I'm excited about that moving forward. I want to, like I said, be a steward with god and a partner with him and taking care of what we've been given and help others do the same. I'm excited about that idea. I love the idea of self-sufficiency and having it all here. I love the idea of a full larder clear full of food that I produce and put up and processed. I love the idea of really experiencing life viscerally and being out in it and participating and making sure my kids know about all that too in a world that's so hands-off and digital these days. And with a rise in depression and all those kind of social, I don't know what to call them, the degradation of the social construct, I feel like gardening is a unique solution to all of those things and I think it could really heal everybody if we got back to earth and to God and to family. That's what farming is for me.

RG: Great. Thanks you for your thoughts and your time. Again this has been Ross Garner with Richie Garner in his home. It's November 4th, 2017. And thank you for your time.